

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Marie Claire Album SAS v. wenliang liao
Case No. D2026-1091

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Marie Claire Album SAS, France, represented by Denнемeyer & Associates SAS, France.

The Respondent is wenliang liao, China, self-represented.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <marieclairechina.net> is registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on March 13, 2026. On the same day, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On March 16, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name that differed from the named Respondent (Unknown / Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on March 17, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on the same day.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on March 25, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 14, 2026. The Response was filed with the Center on March 26, 2026.

The Center appointed Matthew Kennedy as the sole panelist in this matter on April 1, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

Marie Claire is a women's magazine and lifestyle media brand. Marie Claire magazine was first published in 1937 in France and is now published in 32 countries, including China. According to evidence presented by the Complainant, the Chinese edition of that magazine is titled “Marie Claire 嘉人”. The Complainant holds multiple trademark registrations in multiple jurisdictions, including the following:

- Chinese trademark registration number 3754069 for 嘉人, registered on August 28, 2005, specifying goods in class 9;
- Chinese trademark registration number 24953822 for a stylized MARIE CLAIRE mark, registered on September 13, 2018, specifying goods in class 12;
- International trademark registration number 1653596 for a stylized MARIE CLAIRE mark, registered on February 11, 2022, specifying clothing in class 25; and
- International trademark registration number 1757972 for MARIE CLAIRE, registered on June 16, 2023, specifying electronic publications and other goods and services in classes 9, 16, 35, 38, and 41.

The above trademark registrations are current. The Complainant or a related company uses the domain name <marieclaire.fr> in connection with a website that publishes the French edition of Marie Claire magazine, and the domain name <marieclaire.com> in connection with its international website. The magazine's content includes fashion, among other topics. The French website received over 8.7 million visits in July 2025. The Complainant formerly held the disputed domain name, which was registered on January 9, 2008, and subsequently lapsed.

The Respondent is an individual based in China.

The disputed domain name was registered on January 15, 2025. It resolves to a website in Chinese regarding fashion and other topics. According to evidence presented by the Respondent, the website is titled “嘉人时尚” in gold lettering alongside a female silhouette. The following text appears in English on the homepage: “Disclaimer (Independent operation, no affiliation with any third party)”. A separate About Us page advises in Chinese that the website is an independently operated entity, not affiliated with any other identical or similar brands. The website also displays links to third party entertainment websites.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its MARIE CLAIRE mark.

The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant in any manner, has never been authorized or licensed to use the MARIE CLAIRE trademark, and has no independent rights in that name.

The disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith. The Respondent has deliberately sought to exploit the identity, reputation and goodwill attached to the Complainant's well-known MARIE CLAIRE trademark in a targeted and misleading manner. This is a case of opportunistic re-

registration of a lapsed domain name. The operator of the website adopted the name “Jia Ren Fashion”, when the Complainant owns longstanding trademark rights in China for Chinese denominations and translations associated with MARIE CLAIRE, including “美丽佳人” and “瑪利嘉兒”, which confirms the intentional targeting of the Complainant’s mark and reputation.

B. Respondent

The Respondent contends that the Complainant has failed to satisfy all three elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name. He contends that he registered the disputed domain name for the sole purpose of operating an independent Chinese-language fashion information platform named “嘉人时尚” (Jia Ren Fashion).

The Respondent has rights and legitimate interests in the disputed domain name through continuous bona fide use. The disputed domain name has been continuously used to operate a purely Chinese-language fashion platform. The website publishes original content on fashion trends, lifestyle, and beauty, with regular updates from 2025 to 2026. A clear disclaimer on the platform explicitly states that it operates independently and has no affiliation with any third party. This constitutes legitimate use under the Policy.

The disputed domain name does not create confusing similarity with the Complainant’s trademark as “marie claire” is a common French term that translates to “jeune femme élégante” (meaning “elegant young woman”) and is a widely recognized generic phrase in French. Further, the disputed domain name combines this generic term with the geographic identifier “china” and the generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) extension “.net”. This unique combination is materially different from the Complainant’s core trademark, eliminating any reasonable likelihood of consumer confusion.

The Respondent has no bad faith in the registration or use of the disputed domain name and the Complainant’s misleading evidence lacks credibility. First, the Respondent’s platform is a purely Chinese-language website but the Complainant has translated its content and visual elements into English and presented these as “evidence” of an association with the Complainant. These translated materials do not reflect the Respondent’s actual website. Second, the Respondent’s website uses only Chinese content, independent branding, and a prominent disclaimer. It does not use the Complainant’s trademark, trade dress, color scheme, or any other brand elements. Users cannot reasonably confuse the Respondent’s Chinese-language platform with the Complainant’s global operations, and there is no intent to free-ride on the Complainant’s brand reputation. Third, the Respondent has never proactively contacted the Complainant to sell the disputed domain name, demand fees, or seek any form of negotiation.

The Complainant has falsely claimed that the Respondent uses its “marie claire” logo. The Respondent’s logo is an independent design for the Chinese-language platform “嘉人时尚” (Jia Ren Fashion), which has no visual, textual, or conceptual similarity to the Complainant’s “marie claire 瑪利嘉兒” logo.

The Complainant’s decision to initiate UDRP proceedings without prior communication - combined with its submission of modified, translated evidence that misrepresents the Respondent’s actual website - constitutes an abuse of procedure and violates the UDRP’s spirit of encouraging amicable resolution.

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1 Preliminary Issue: Allegation of Falsified Evidence

Each Party submits a different screenshot of the website associated with the disputed domain name. The Respondent alleges that the Complainant’s screenshot has been falsified.

The Complainant’s screenshot was taken on March 12, 2026, the day before the Complaint was filed. The Panel has consulted the Internet archive, which contains screenshots of the website up to February 11, 2026, and has also visited the current website. All the archived screenshots and the current website are in

Chinese, whereas the Complainant's screenshot is in English. This suggests that the Complainant may have submitted an automatic translation of the website, without alerting the Respondent or the Panel. This may have been an honest mistake, as the language of the proceeding is English.

The Respondent objects specifically to the fact that the Complainant's screenshot shows the MARIE CLAIRE mark as the website title, rather than “嘉人时尚”. The Panel agrees that, if the MARIE CLAIRE mark did not appear on the original version of the website as shown in the Complainant's screenshot, the Complainant should have indicated as much in the Complaint. Yet it remains unclear whether that mark did so appear. On one hand, at least one automatic translation tool translates “嘉人” as “Marie Claire”. On the other hand, the title was formatted in a logo that may not have been translated, and the favicon on the Chinese website shows an initial “M” in the same stylized form as the title of the Complainant's screenshot, not as in the title of the Respondent's screenshot.

In any case, the Complainant never asserted that the Respondent used the MARIE CLAIRE trademark on its website. Rather, it alleged use of that mark in the disputed domain name, and use of other, Chinese marks on the associated website.

For the above reasons, the Panel is not satisfied that the Complainant's screenshot has been falsified. As there is no allegation that the MARIE CLAIRE mark appears on the Respondent's website, there is no need to consider this part of the evidence in the assessment of the case merits.

6.2 Substantive Issues

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy provides that a complainant must demonstrate each of the following elements:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the complainant has rights; and
- (ii) the respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

The burden of proof of each element is borne by the Complainant.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. See WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (“[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)”), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of the MARIE CLAIRE trademark for the purposes of the Policy. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the MARIE CLAIRE mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Despite the addition of the country name “China”, the mark remains clearly recognizable within the disputed domain name. The only additional element in the disputed domain name is a gTLD extension (“.net”) which, as a standard requirement of domain name registration, may be disregarded in the assessment of confusing similarity for the purposes of the Policy. Contrary to the Respondent's assertion, these additional elements do not eliminate a finding of confusing similarity. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), sections 1.7, 1.8, and 1.11.1.

The Respondent argues that there is no confusing similarity because of an alleged dictionary meaning of the mark. However, that alleged meaning may be relevant to the second element of the Policy, which is considered below.

Therefore, the Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving that a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of “proving a negative”, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.1.

In the present case, the disputed domain name combines the MARIE CLAIRE mark with the country name “China”, which creates a heightened risk of implied affiliation, as it suggests that it will resolve to the Chinese edition of Marie Claire magazine. The title of the associated website “嘉人时尚” combines another trademark belonging to the Complainant (i.e., 嘉人, which is used in the title of the Chinese edition of Marie Claire magazine), and a word meaning fashion (i.e., “时尚”, which describes much of the content of that magazine). The subject matter of the associated website is similar to that of the Complainant’s Marie Claire magazine. This all creates the confusing impression that the website is somehow affiliated with, or endorsed by, the Complainant. The Complainant submits that the Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant in any manner and has never been authorized or licensed to use the MARIE CLAIRE trademark. These circumstances do not indicate that the Respondent is using the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services.

The Respondent’s name is “wenliang liao” and his email username is “landyliao”. Neither name resembles the disputed domain name. Nothing indicates that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The website associated with the disputed domain name displays partner links to other entertainment websites. This use is for the commercial gain of the Respondent, if he is paid to direct traffic to the linked websites, or for the commercial gain of the operators of the linked websites, or both. This circumstance does not indicate that the Respondent is making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

Turning to the Response, the Respondent notes that his website is a purely Chinese language fashion platform and alleges that its content is original. However, this does not legitimize his use of the disputed domain name, as it appears intended to divert Internet users searching for the Chinese edition of Marie Claire magazine. The detailed disclaimer in Chinese on his website is not prominent or even displayed on the homepage while the brief disclaimer in English may not be intelligible to the readers of his Chinese website. In any case, by the time that Internet users reach the disclaimers, the disputed domain name has already achieved its diversionary purpose.

The Respondent also alleges that the term “marie claire” as used in the disputed domain name is a French word meaning “elegant young woman”. It does not substantiate this allegation. Instead, it simply provides a dictionary definition of “claire”, not as used in the disputed domain name.

In sum, the Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's prima facie showing.

Based on the present record, the Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith. The fourth such circumstance is as follows:

“(iv) by using the [disputed] domain name, [the respondent has] intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to [the respondent's] website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of [the respondent's] website or location or of a product or service on [the respondent's] website or location.”

In the present case, the disputed domain name was registered in 2025, after the registration of the Complainant's MARIE CLAIRE mark. The disputed domain name combines that mark with the country name “China”, giving the false impression that it will resolve to a website for the Chinese edition of Marie Claire magazine. The title of the associated website “嘉人时尚” combines another trademark belonging to the Complainant used in the title of the Chinese edition of Marie Claire magazine and a word describing much of the content of that magazine. The content of the website associated with the disputed domain name is similar in coverage to that of the Complainant's Marie Claire magazine. Moreover, the Respondent does not deny awareness of the Complainant or its mark. In view of all these circumstances, the Panel finds that the Respondent knew of the Complainant and its mark when he registered the disputed domain name.

The Complainant also argues that the Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name was in bad faith because it was previously held by the Complainant, but lapsed. However, there is no evidence as to whether the disputed domain name was marketed as a lapsed domain name, nor is there evidence that the Complainant ever used the disputed domain name in connection with an active website. Accordingly, this additional circumstance does not necessarily indicate that the Respondent knew, or should have known, of the Complainant or its mark.

As regards use, the disputed domain name is used to resolve to a website in Chinese regarding fashion and other topics. Taking into account the findings in Section 6.2B above, the Panel finds that, by using the disputed domain name, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to his website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website and of the content on that website, within the terms of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Therefore, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

D. Reverse Domain Name Hijacking

Paragraph 15(e) of the Rules provides that, if after considering the submissions, the Panel finds that the Complaint was brought in bad faith, for example in an attempt at Reverse Domain Name Hijacking or to harass the domain-name holder, the Panel shall declare in its decision that the Complaint was brought in bad faith and constitutes an abuse of the administrative proceeding. The mere lack of success of the complaint is not, on its own, sufficient to constitute reverse domain name hijacking. See [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 4.16.

The Respondent alleges that the Complaint was brought in bad faith. The Panel has not found that the Complainant falsified evidence, for the reasons given in Section 6.1 above. As the Panel has upheld the Complaint, the Panel does not find that it has been brought in bad faith or that it constitutes an attempt at Reverse Domain Name Hijacking.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <marieclairechina.net> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Matthew Kennedy/

Matthew Kennedy

Sole Panelist

Date: April 15, 2026