

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Qiddiya Investment Company v. Ko Wanjong
Case No. D2026-1721

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Qiddiya Investment Company, Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of), represented by Saba & Co. Intellectual Property s.a.l. (Offshore) Head Office, Lebanon.

The Respondent is Ko Wanjong, Republic of Korea, represented by Cylaw Solutions, India.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <qiddiyacity.com> is registered with Megazone Corp., dba HOSTING.KR (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on April 22, 2026. On April 23, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On April 24, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response confirming that the Respondent is listed as the registrant and providing the contact details.

On April 29, 2026, the Center informed the parties in Korean and English that the language of the registration agreement for the disputed domain name was Korean. On May 1, 2026 the Respondent requested Korean to be the language of the proceeding. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint in English on May 4, 2026, and requested English to be the language of the proceeding.

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 in Korean and English of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on May 5, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was May 25, 2026. On May 19, 2026 the Respondent requested the automatic four calendar day extension for Response under

paragraph 5(b) of the Rules. The Center granted the requested extension and fixed the new due date for Response on May 29, 2026. The Response was filed with the Center on May 29, 2026.

The Center appointed Assen Alexiev, Mohamed-Hossam Loutfi, and Gerald M. Levine as panelists in this matter on June 23, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. Each member of 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.

On July 1, 2026, the Respondent filed a supplemental submission. On July 3, 2026, the Complainant filed a supplemental submission. On the same date, the Respondent filed a second supplemental submission.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant was established to oversee the implementation and development of the Qiddiya project – a Saudi mega-project aimed at becoming one of the largest cultural, sports, and entertainment destinations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and globally. The project is located southwest of the Saudi capital Riyadh and covers a total area of 376 sq. km. Its commencement was officially announced on April 7, 2017 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, chairman of the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund (“PIF”), which is the main investor in the project. The Complainant operates its official website at the domain name <qiddiya.com>.

The Complainant is the owner of the following trademark registrations for  (the “QIDDIYA trademark”), registered in Saudi Arabia:

- the trademark with registration No. 1440004754, registered on January 9, 2019¹ for goods in International Class 2;
- the trademark with registration No. 1440004757, registered on January 9, 2019 for goods in International Class 3; and
- the trademark with registration No. 1440004762, registered on January 9, 2019 for goods in International Class 4.

The QIDDIYA trademark displays the text “Al-Qiddiya” in Arabic script above the text “Qiddiya” in Latin script.

The disputed domain name was registered on November 3, 2017. It resolves to a landing page with the title “Welcome to Qiddiya City!”, which displays the text “Coming Soon” followed by a list of topics such as Resort, Theme Park, Entertainment, Tours, Culture, Sports, eSports, Golf, Hotels, Residence, and Shopping. The page also displays the Respondent’s email address.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant states that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its QIDDIYA trademark, because it incorporates the trademark in its entirety with the addition of the dictionary term “city”, which does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity. The Complainant states that its entertainment project is widely referred to as “Qiddiya City”, including in official communications and

¹ The dates of the trademark registrations have been converted from the Hijri calendar with the use of the online converter at <https://ummalquracalendar.org/umm-al-qura-date-converter/>.

among Internet users seeking information about it. According to the Complainant, the inclusion of the term “city” in the disputed domain name exacerbates the likelihood of confusion by suggesting an association with the Complainant.

According to the Complainant, the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Complainant submits that the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name and has not relevant trademark rights. According to the Complainant, the Respondent has not used the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services, and is not making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of it, without intent for commercial gain misleadingly to divert consumers or to tarnish the Complainant’s trademark. The Complainant adds that it has not authorised the Respondent to use the QIDDIYA trademark or to register a domain name incorporating it, and that there is no relationship between the Parties.

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. It maintains that the QIDDIYA trademark is distinctive and widely known. The Complainant points out that the disputed domain name combines the QIDDIYA trademark with the term “city”, which directly corresponds to the name by which the Complainant’s flagship development project is widely known, “Qiddiya City”, which was publicly announced in April 2017 and received extensive international and regional media coverage well before the registration of the disputed domain name. According to the Complainant, the composition of the disputed domain name cannot reasonably be regarded as coincidental. Rather, it demonstrates that the Respondent was aware of the QIDDIYA trademark and targeted it and the Complainant’s project when registering the disputed domain name.

The Complainant notes that the Respondent has used the disputed domain name to display content referring to the Qiddiya project, including references to entertainment, tourism, culture, and future development. According to the Complainant, such use demonstrates an intentional attempt to attract Internet users by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant’s QIDDIYA trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the disputed domain name and of the associated website. The Complainant notes that the website at the disputed domain name displays the text “Coming soon”. According to it, such non-use does not preclude a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding.

With its supplemental submission, the Complainant makes a number of additional statements, summarised below in relevant part.

The Complainant states that the two prior decisions in *Qiddiya Investment Company v. Jamshad Ahmed*, WIPO Case No. [D2026-1708](#), and *Qiddiya Investment Company v. Adel Alansari*, WIPO Case No. [D2026-1709](#), referred to by the Respondent, are consistent with the Complainant’s central submission that by late 2017, QIDDIYA had already acquired sufficient public significance.

According to the Complainant, the Respondent’s reference to the domain name <gbacity.com> does not establish any credible pattern of legitimate geographic registration, and only shows that the Respondent has registered one other domain name containing the word “city”. The evidence submitted by the Respondent in this regard does not show any active use, legitimate preparations, commercial development, or any operational informational website. The Complainant adds that the existence of a single unrelated domain name cannot explain why the Respondent registered the disputed domain name just months after the Qiddiya project had been publicly announced and why it retained the disputed domain name while permitting the domain name <al-qiddiya.com> to lapse, despite now maintaining that the latter more accurately reflected the alleged historical or geographic expression.

The Complainant states that the Respondent seeks to transform this proceeding into a broader debate as to whether “Qiddiya” had a historical or geographic meaning prior to the Complainant’s project. According to the Complainant, the decisive question is not whether historical geographic references existed, but whether the Respondent has adduced credible contemporaneous evidence to

demonstrate that it registered and held the disputed domain name because of a genuine descriptive interest in a location, rather than because it tracked the emerging commercial significance of the Complainant's publicly announced project.

The Complainant submits that the Respondent's supplemental submissions do not remedy the absence of such evidence. Rather, the Respondent's supplemental submissions make its position even weaker, because the Respondent acknowledges that the Arabic-language materials attached to the Response were supplied to it only in May 2026 by counsel in a different proceeding, and that such materials were difficult to locate even in 2026 for a non-Arabic-speaking team. According to the Complainant, that admission undermines the proposition that a Korean registrant in 2017 independently selected the disputed domain name by reference to nuanced historical or geographic references in Arabic sources.

The Complainant adds that the disputed domain name does not adopt the historical formulation "Al-Qiddiya", but the English construction "Qiddiya + city", which corresponds more naturally to a large-scale development than to any alleged historical road, descent, or topographic feature.

The Complainant refers to section 3.8.2 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#) in support of its argument that bad faith may be found where a respondent registers a domain name in anticipation of a complainant's nascent rights following significant media attention, a major project announcement, or a comparable prominent public event. In this regard, the Complainant submits that the Qiddiya project was officially announced in April 2017, several months before the Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name on November 3, 2017. According to the Complainant, the Respondent's own conduct further weakens its chronology argument. It notes that, had the Respondent's interest rested on the historical term "Al-Qiddiya", it is unexplained why the domain name <al-qiddiya.com> was permitted to lapse while the disputed domain name was retained. That selection, the Complainant argues, strongly suggests that it was the disputed domain name that was perceived as carrying a commercial significance by reason of its association with the Complainant's project.

Finally, the Complainant states that a commercial approach or purchase inquiry does not amount to an admission that the Respondent had rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and does not preclude the subsequent filing of a complaint under the Policy. According to the Complainant, trademark owners may reasonably explore commercial resolution first for reasons of efficiency, cost, business practicality, or timing.

B. Respondent

The Respondent maintains that the keyword contained in the disputed domain name "Qiddiya" is purely a geographic place name of centuries-old historical significance, while the Complainant has come to this proceeding as a "Plan B", after failing to acquire the disputed domain name through direct outreach to the Respondent in March 2025, which did not result in an agreement. The Respondent points out that at the time the disputed domain name was registered in November 2017, the Complainant did not exist as a legal entity and was incorporated only on May 10, 2018, and that no trademark application had been filed in any jurisdiction anywhere in the world. The Respondent maintains that it could not have targeted rights that did not exist and could not have sought authorisation from an entity that had not yet come into existence.

According to the Respondent, "Qiddiya" is not an invented or coined term, but the name of a real geographic location in Saudi Arabia, specifically a region in the Tuwaiq Mountains range that historically served as a passage on ancient trade and pilgrimage routes, its name derived from the Arabic root "al-qad" meaning "the split." The Respondent points out that the pre-existing geographic significance of "Qiddiya" is a matter of documented public record spanning seventeen years before the Complainant's project announcement.

The Respondent refers in this regard to several articles, including a June 14, 2000 article in the Al-Jazirah newspaper, which mentions “Al-Qiddiya” as a geographic road feature along the Tuwaiq Mountains, a July 20, 2007 Al-Jazirah article, which reports on road accidents at the Al-Qiddiya mountain descent near the Riyadh-Jeddah highway, and to further Al-Jazirah coverage from 2010 and an Al Riyadh newspaper article from 2013. The Respondent notes that the Complainant itself acknowledges in the Complaint that its development project is located among “the breathtaking natural landscapes of the historic Qiddiya site” and notes “the historical significance of the Qiddiya area, whose origins date back centuries”.

The Respondent also refers to an archived Wikipedia article, captured on December 12, 2020, titled “Al-Qiddiya” and describing it in geographic and historical terms, and states that the current Wikipedia article is now titled “Qiddiya City”. The Respondent also notes that Google Maps displayed the location under its historic designation “Al-Qiddiya” in November 2017, and the label “Qiddiya City” only appeared on the mapping platform recently.

The Respondent further states that, unlike entertainment destinations named after coined terms and located in places with independent geographic identities, such as Disneyland in Anaheim, California, and Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, the Complainant’s project shares its name with the real geographic location in which it sits, that is, “Qiddiya”, so there is no separate geographic identifier for the location that does not involve the word “Qiddiya”. According to the Respondent, to grant the Complainant exclusive rights in that word would be to grant a monopoly not over a commercial identifier but over the only available expression for a geographic place.

The Respondent states that the Complainant has filed its trademark evidence entirely in Arabic without providing certified or unofficial English translations, so the Respondent is unable to verify their full contents, including any trademark description, conditions, or disclaimer appearing on the face of the certificate. The Respondent points out that the earliest filing date across the Complainant’s trademark portfolio is November 1, 2018 - one year after the disputed domain name was registered, and the Complainant held no trademark rights anywhere in the world in November 2017.

The Respondent notes that the sole evidence of the Complainant’s reputation in 2017 is a press release of 26 words announcing a future planned development, with no description of goods or services, no commercial activity, no advertising, and no trademark significance. The Respondent submits that the term “Qiddiya City” does not appear in that press release or in the earliest archived versions of the Complainant’s official website at the domain name <qiddiya.com>, launched in May 2018, and the Wayback Machine records show that “Qiddiya City” did not appear on the Complainant’s own website even as a navigation label until December 2023, six years after the registration of the disputed domain name.

The Respondent states that it recalls only that it was introduced to the name “Qiddiya” as a geographic location by an associate in November 2017, which he was able to locate on Google Maps at that time under its historic designation “Al-Qiddiya”. The Respondent adds that it also registered the domain name <al-qiddiya.com> on the same date in November 2017, which it later allowed to lapse. The Response states that it was only in the course of time that the Respondent became aware of the commercial development plans for the Qiddiya region, while the first “Coming Soon” page was already established by the Respondent at the disputed domain name in 2021. The Respondent points out that the Complainant’s launch ceremony took place on April 28, 2018, nearly five months after the registration of the disputed domain name.

The Respondent notes that on March 20, 2025, it received an unsolicited approach from a person who turned out to be a senior manager of the Complainant’s company, asking whether the disputed domain name was available for purchase. According to the Respondent, this shows that the filing of the Complaint is a classic “Plan B” case, since the Policy was never intended as a mechanism to obtain through administrative proceedings what a party failed to achieve through negotiation, and its approach of the Respondent is wholly inconsistent with the Complainant’s current assertion that the

Respondent lacks legitimate interests in the disputed domain name or that it was registered and used in bad faith.

The Respondent submits that the UDRP was designed to deal with cases of cybersquatting and is not the appropriate forum to decide upon civil disputes or any kind of trademark rights between different parties.

According to the Respondent, the Complainant has failed to satisfy its burden of proof under paragraph

4(a)(i) of the Policy, since its trademark rights are confined to a highly-stylised composite device mark featuring prominent Arabic script paired with coloured circles and vertical lines, and not a standard Latin word mark for “QIDDIYA”. The Respondent maintains that the appropriate comparison is between the disputed domain name and the composite trademark as actually registered. The Respondent adds that the Complainant has provided no translation of the Arabic language evidence submitted by it, leaving the Respondent unable to assess the trademark as a whole. According to the Respondent, it is well established that a geographically descriptive name does not become exclusively protectable merely by reason of trademark registration, but secondary meaning needs to be established.

The Respondent maintains that it has rights and legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, because at the time of its registration in November 2017, “Qiddiya” was a centuries-old geographic place name carrying no trademark significance, which is confirmed by the Complainant’s own admissions, by the pre-2017 Saudi newspaper record submitted as Annex IV to the Response and the absence of any trademark filing anywhere in the world until November 2018.

The Respondent maintains that the disputed domain name is wholly composed of a geographic place name combined with the common descriptive word “city”, and is a combination carrying a descriptive meaning separate and distinct from the Complainant’s composite device trademarks. According to the Respondent, it is long established under the Policy that where a domain name is descriptive or geographic in character, the first person to register it in good faith is entitled to the domain name, and such registration constitutes a legitimate interest.

According to the Respondent, the absence of a licence or authorisation is not evidence of an absence of legitimate interests, particularly where the Complainant did not even exist as a legal entity at the time of registration.

The Respondent further states that the use of the name of a geographic place to refer to that geographic place constitutes nominative fair use that cannot be precluded by any trademark owner, and refers in this regard to [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.7.

The Respondent submits that the disputed domain name uses the geographic name of a real city – Qiddiya City, Saudi Arabia, to refer to that city and provide information about it as a destination, as evidenced by the categories of content displayed on the Respondent’s parked page. Each of these categories describes an amenity or activity available at any city as a geographic destination, not a service offered by or affiliated with the Complainant. According to the Respondent, this is the most elementary form of nominative use – using a name to refer to the thing the name describes, and no trademark owner, however well-resourced, can claim the exclusive right to use the name of a real geographic place to refer to that place on the Internet, and to do so would be to grant a monopoly not over a trademark but over a geography.

According to the Respondent, the fact that the disputed domain name currently resolves to a “Coming Soon” page does not preclude a finding of legitimate interests. Under paragraph 4(c)(i) of the Policy, legitimate interests may be established by demonstrable preparations to use the domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services, made before any notice of the dispute.

The Respondent notes that the single webpage at the disputed domain name constitutes evidence of the Respondent's intended use rather than evidence against it.

The Respondent submits that the Complainant must prove that, at the time of registration, the Respondent chose the disputed domain name because of its trademark significance, rather than because it combined the geographical term "Qiddiya" with the common word "city".

The Respondent submits that it was introduced to the name "Qiddiya" as a geographic location by an associate in November 2017. According to it, awareness of a geographic place name or even a nascent development project does not, without more, constitute knowledge of a trademark, nor does it evidence intent to target the Complainant's rights.

The Respondent maintains that the term "Qiddiya City" did not exist as a brand identifier until November 2023. According to it, the reputation of the Qiddiya project as of today does not transform the geographic place name into an exclusive trademark capable of grounding bad faith findings.

The Respondent maintains that the authorities relied upon by the Complainant concern entertainment destinations bearing coined or inherently distinctive names, situated in locations that have separate and established geographic identities of their own. Those authorities are clearly distinguishable from the present matter, where "Qiddiya" has been documented as a real geographic location for centuries, predating the Complainant's project by an immeasurable margin, and there is no alternative geographic expression for the location. To find bad faith in the registration of the disputed domain name would be to grant the Complainant a monopoly over the only available geographic descriptor for a real place, an outcome the Policy was never designed to produce and which would cause manifest injustice to the traveling public and legitimate third-party service providers who have a commercial necessity to use the name.

The Respondent denies that the content of the landing page at the disputed domain name demonstrates an intentional attempt to attract Internet users by creating confusion. According to it, the categories displayed are not specific to the Complainant's project, but describe the universal vocabulary of any major city or tourism destination worldwide. The parked page makes no reference to the Complainant by name, displays no Complainant branding, and contains no hyperlinks to the Complainant's website.

The Respondent points out that it never solicited the Complainant or used the disputed domain name to interfere with or harm the Complainant's business.

The Respondent requests a finding of Reverse Domain Name Hijacking ("RDNH"). According to it, the Complainant, represented by counsel, knew or should have known that the Complaint could not succeed on the merits, because its entire worldwide trademark portfolio was filed one year after the registration of the disputed domain name, and because the filing of the Complaint is a classic "Plan B", carried out after its own senior executive's unsolicited approach to acquire the disputed domain name failed to result in an agreement.

With its first supplemental submission, the Respondent makes a number of statements, summarised below in relevant part:

The Respondent states that the decisions in *Qiddiya Investment Company v. Jamshad Ahmed*, WIPO Case No. [D2026-1708](#) and *Qiddiya Investment Company v. Adel Alansari*, WIPO Case No. [D2026-1709](#), are distinguishable from the present case, as they involved a different chronology and facts.

The Respondent states that its choice to combine a place name with the English dictionary word “city” in November 2017 is consistent with a documented contemporaneous pattern of geographic-descriptive domain registration. Approximately one month earlier, in October 2017, the Respondent registered the domain name <gbacity.com>, combining the abbreviation “gba”, denoting the Greater Bay Area, an economic region in southern China.

According to the Respondent, the UDRP cannot definitively resolve contested questions of historical geographic settlement. Such questions depend on Saudi Arabian municipal records, settlement archaeology, witness testimony from local residents and historians, and expert geographic evidence, none of which can be produced, examined, or cross-examined in summary administrative proceedings of this kind. The Policy was deliberately confined to clear cases of cybersquatting and was not designed to resolve contested historical-geographic disputes. The Respondent submits that the Panel can deny the Complaint without needing to resolve the underlying historical-geographic question.

The Respondent states that the Arabic-language Saudi press materials at Annex IV of the Response were not located by the Respondent or by its counsel but were provided in May 2026 by the counsel acting in the *Qiddiya Investment Company v. Jamshad Ahmed*, WIPO Case [D2026-1708](#). Additional post-2017 Arabic-language articles were located by the Respondent’s counsel and were submitted with the Response. The Respondent submits that these sourcing facts confirm that such materials were unfindable to a non-Arabic-speaking defence team even in 2026, let alone to a Korean retiree in 2017.

With its second supplemental submission, the Respondent makes a number of additional statements, summarised below in relevant part.

The Respondent states that the registration dates in the translations of the Complainant’s trademark certificates are indicated in an unintelligible format and that the description of the trademarks confirms that they are composite device marks combining “Al-Qiddiya” in Arabic script with “Qiddiya” in Latin script and figurative elements, rather than word marks for “Qiddiya”. The Respondent adds that none of these registrations extends to goods or services in the fields of entertainment, tourism, hospitality, real estate, or destination development - the fields in which the Complainant claims recognition as of today and asserts a likelihood of confusion.

The Respondent states that Annex 2 to the Complainant’s supplemental submission is a screenshot of current search-engine results, visibly displaying content that could not have existed in 2017 and only demonstrates that the Complainant’s project is publicly associated with “Qiddiya City” today.

According to the Respondent, Annexes 3 and 4 to the Complainant’s supplemental submission are not credible contemporaneous evidence for public notoriety as of 2017. In respect of Annex 3, the Respondent states that it is a screenshot of a present-day profile on the social network X, and the only asserted link to June 2017 is the date of creation of the account. The Respondent maintains that profile content on X can be changed after creation while the original creation date is retained, and notes that the screenshot displays the Complainant’s logo which did not yet exist in June 2017, considering the announcement of this logo in October 2017 as per Annex 4 to the Complainant’s supplemental submission. As to this same Annex 4, which is an article published in “Al Arabiya” with the title “Saudi Public Investment Fund unveils entertainment city logo” with publication date indicated as October 24, 2017, the Respondent notes that this publication also carries the notice “Updated: 20 May 2020”, indicating that the page has been edited at least once since publication, with no way to determine what, if anything, changed. The Respondent also notes that the Public Investment Fund is the Complainant’s main investor and holds a majority, controlling stake in the parent company of Al Arabiya.

The Respondent submits that its decision to allow the domain name <al-qiddiya.com> to lapse, while maintaining the disputed domain name, was an ordinary administrative and commercial choice that may be informed by any number of considerations unrelated to the Complainant, including cost, perceived utility, or simple preference, and says nothing of the state of mind of the Respondent on date of registration of the disputed domain name.

Finally, the Respondent states that the task facing its representatives in 2026 was to locate specific, citable documentary sources capable of withstanding scrutiny in this proceeding, which is a materially different and more demanding exercise than whatever general awareness a member of the public might have had in 2017 regarding the name “Qiddiya”, and the difficulty of the former says nothing about the accessibility of the latter. The Respondent refers to its sworn declaration regarding the circumstances in which the disputed domain name came to be registered.

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1. Preliminary Issue – Language of the Proceedings

The language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is Korean. Pursuant to the Rules, paragraph 11(a), in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless specified otherwise in the registration agreement, the language of the administrative proceedings shall be the language of the registration agreement.

The Complaint was filed in English. The Complainant requests that the language of the proceedings be English, with the arguments that the disputed domain name is composed of Latin characters and incorporates the Latin script element of the Complainant's QIDDIYA trademark alongside the English word “city”, and that the website at the disputed domain name is published entirely in English. According to the Complainant, this demonstrates that the Respondent understands English and uses it for commercial communications. The Complainant adds that requiring it to translate the Complaint into Korean would result in significant expenses and undue delay. According to the Complainant, conducting the proceedings in English would ensure administrative efficiency without prejudice to the Respondent.

The Respondent initially requested that the language of the proceedings be Korean. The Respondent however sent its email communications to the Center, and filed its Response in English. The Response contains a statement that the Respondent does not oppose the Complainant's request that English be the language of the proceeding.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the registration agreement, the Panel has to exercise such discretion judicially in the spirit of fairness and justice to both parties, taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including matters such as the parties' ability to understand and use the proposed language, time and costs (see WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ([“WIPO Overview 3.1”](#)), section 4.5.1).

Having considered all the matters above, the Panel determines under paragraph 11(a) of the Rules that the language of the proceedings shall be English.

6.2 Procedural issue – Supplemental submissions

Both parties have submitted unsolicited supplemental submissions.

Paragraph 10 of the Rules vests the panel with the authority to determine the admissibility, relevance, materiality and weight of the evidence, and also to conduct the proceedings with due expedition, and paragraph 12 of the Rules provides that it is for the panel to request, in its sole discretion, any further statements or documents from the parties it may deem necessary to decide the case.

As commented in section 4.6 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), unsolicited supplemental filings are generally discouraged, unless specifically requested by the panel, and panels have repeatedly affirmed that the party submitting or requesting to submit an unsolicited supplemental filing should clearly show its relevance to the case and why it was unable to provide the information contained therein in its complaint or response (e.g., owing to some unforeseen or exceptional circumstance).

Having reviewed the content of the supplemental submissions of the parties and the attached to them evidence, the Panel reached the conclusion that some of the additional information and evidence in them was relevant to the dispute and, exercising its discretion under paragraph 12 of the Rules, decided to accept them and take them into account to the extent necessary for the determination of the merits of the Complaint and of the Response.

6.3. Substantive issues

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. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

The Complainant has submitted evidence that it is the owner of the QIDDIYA trademark. With its supplemental submission, the Complainant provided English translations of the relevant trademark certificates, which allows the Panel to take this evidence into account. The Panel is not aware of any reasons to question the validity of the above trademark.

The disputed domain name was registered in 2017, while the QIDDIYA trademark was registered in 2019. This fact does not by itself preclude the Complainant's standing to file the Complaint and the Panel's finding of identity or confusing similarity under the first element (section 1.1.3 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#)).

For the purposes of the first element analysis, the Panel takes into account the textual elements of the QIDDIYA trademarks, which include "Al-Qiddiya" in Arabic script and "Qiddiya" in Latin script. See section 1.10 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#). The "qiddiya" element of the disputed domain name is identical to "Qiddiya" in Latin script and is a confusingly similar transliteration of "Al-Qiddiya" in Arabic script. See section 1.14 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#). The inclusion of the dictionary term "city" in the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity with the Complainant's QIDDIYA trademarks under the first element. See section 1.8 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#).

Considering the above, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to trademarks in which the Complainant has rights, and that the Complainant has established the first element.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests and Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel considers that the circumstances of this case would benefit from a joint discussion of these two elements, because they are closely intertwined. If the Panel finds that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name targeting the Complainant's trademark rights, that would mean that the Respondent does not have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. See section 2.15 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#).

Having considered the combination of circumstances of this case, the statements made by the parties and the evidence submitted by them, the Panel came to the conclusion that the Respondent's explanations why and how it registered the disputed domain name are not reliable.

The Respondent states that it is “well-versed in the Korean language only” (para.2 of the Respondent’s Declaration). The Korean language uses the Hangul alphabet,² which is different from the Arabic and Latin alphabets. The disputed domain name is a combination of the Arabic word “Qiddiya”, written in Latin script, with the English dictionary word “city”, the associated website is only in English, and the Respondent states that it intends to use it for a destination information portal for a geographic location in Saudi Arabia. If one accepts the Respondent’s statement that the Korean language is the only language that it knows well, this makes one wonder how and why the Respondent chose the disputed domain name and how it (claiming to be a retired person) would gather and prepare the content on the planned English language information portal. The Panel considers that the Respondent would need a good knowledge of English and good sources of information about Saudi Arabia to maintain such a website. The Panel has not been made aware of any sources of information in Korean that may be available to the Respondent. This leads the Panel to the conclusion that it is more likely than not that the Respondent has a good command of English but prefers not to disclose this.

The Respondent states that it is a retired professional, but gives no details about its former profession, does not describe the activities that it currently engages in, and does not explain why it registers different domain names. It does not mention being a domain investor. The Panel expects that a person engaged in legitimate activities and acting in good faith would provide at least some indication about its activities.

The Respondent states that it “was introduced to the name ‘Qiddiya’ by an associate in November 2017 as a geographic location in Saudi Arabia” (para.2 of the Respondent’s Declaration), but does not indicate the name of this “associate”, does not explain its relationship with it, and does not provide a declaration by the associate. There is no explanation why an unidentified third person would bother to mention to the Respondent that there is a place with an unusual name in the desert in a remote country, and why the Respondent would be interested in this fact, considering that the Respondent does not mention having any links to Saudi Arabia or to the Arab world in general. The Panel would expect that a person claiming to have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name would provide at least some of this information. It appears to the Panel that the Respondent’s reference to the anonymous “associate” as the source of information about “Qiddiya” and its meaning may have been designed to obscure the exact way how the Respondent came to know about this name and what exactly it learned about it.

The Respondent also states “As I recall, the search for ‘Qiddiya’ on Google Maps at that time yielded a location southwest of Riyadh, displayed under the place name ‘Al-Qiddiya’ (not ‘Qiddiya’) – the historic geographic designation for that area” (para.3 of the Respondent’s Declaration). The Respondent does not explain how it understood in 2017 that “Al-Qiddiya” was “the historic geographic designation for that area”. There is no evidence that Google Maps contained such information in 2017. The Respondent does not refer to any sources of information that were available to it in 2017, and explicitly confirms that no such evidence was available to non-Arabic speakers at the time and that the evidence about the geographic name Al-Qiddiya became only available to it through the counsel in another UDRP proceeding in 2026 (para.15 of the Respondent’s first supplemental submission). With its second supplemental submission, the Respondent makes further comments on this issue, but does not refer to any particular source of information that was available to it in 2017 about the alleged historical significance of the name “Qiddiya”. This leads the Panel to the conclusion that it is more likely than not that the Respondent did not know about the alleged historical significance of the name “Qiddiya” in 2017, and that it learned about it only recently.

The Respondent does not mention whether it made a Google search for “qiddiya” prior to the registration of the disputed domain name, and its Declaration does not include a denial of knowledge of the Qiddiya entertainment project at the time. The Panel considers that an average reasonable person looking for information about an unknown subject in a distant unrelated country would make an

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hangul>

online search in Google or other search engine. The Complainant has submitted a copy of an online publication³ dated October 24, 2017 (ten days before the registration of the disputed domain name) with the title “Saudi Public Investment Fund unveils entertainment city logo”, which displays the logo and starts with the text “The Public Investment Fund unveiled the logo of the Qiddiya project, which will be the Saudi kingdom’s largest cultural, sports and entertainment city.” The Respondent disputes the authenticity and dating of this publication, so the Panel used its discretion to carry out independent research in publicly-available sources of information (section 4.8 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#)) and made a Google search for the keyword “qiddiya” which was time-limited to results published before November 4, 2017. The results of the search included the publication submitted by the Complainant, so the Panel accepts as more likely than not that this publication was available on the Internet at the time of registration of the disputed domain name and that such publication would be listed in the results of a Google search for “qiddiya” made at the time of registration of the disputed domain name.

The Respondent does not explain why it simultaneously registered two domain names – the disputed domain name and the domain name <al-qiddiya.com>. It asserts that it registered them because of its understanding that “Al-Qiddiya” was a historic geographic designation, but this does not credibly explain why it dropped the first part of this Arabic name and combined it with the English word “city” to create the disputed domain name, especially since there is no evidence in the case that there had been any settlement in Saudi Arabia named Al-Qiddiya before the Complainant started construction works at the site (the Respondent’s evidence that it obtained in 2026 refers to a slope on a road or to an escarpment). This explanation also makes it appear illogical that the Respondent abandoned the domain name <al-qiddiya.com>, which identically reflected the alleged historical name. Although the Complainant commented on this in its supplemental submission, the Respondent still did not disclose the reasons why it abandoned the other domain name and kept only the disputed domain name even in its second supplemental submission. It appears to the Panel that a logical explanation for the Respondent’s choices what to register and what to abandon is that the disputed domain name reflects the name of the Complainant’s project which had recently been announced, while the domain name <al-qiddiya.com> had no such commercial attractiveness.

The Respondent maintains that its choice to combine the place name “Qiddiya” with the English dictionary word “city” is consistent with its choice to register in October 2017 the domain name <gbacity.com>, which according to it combines the abbreviation “gba”, denoting the Greater Bay Area, an economic region in southern China, with the term “city”. The Panel does not understand how this could be relevant to the present case, considering that the Greater Bay Area is according to Wikipedia⁴ the largest and most populated urban area in the world, with a total population of approximately 86 million people, whereas “Al-Qiddiya” in the Respondent’s own evidence in Annex IV to the Response was a slope on a road in the desert in Saudi Arabia. Perhaps this reference may be relevant to the extent that it also concerns a place in another country to which the Respondent does not appear to have any connection and whose language the Respondent does not claim to understand, and a domain name that also does not resolve to an active website.

The Respondent states that “it now remains my genuine intention to develop [the disputed domain name] as a geographic destination information portal” (para.3 of the Respondent’s Declaration). However, eight years have passed since the registration of the disputed domain name, and the only content published on it is a “Coming Soon” landing page with a list of entertainment services, provided or planned to be provided as part of the Complainant’s Qiddiya entertainment project. There is no evidence that the Respondent has ever included any other content on this webpage in the eight years since the registration of the disputed domain name. The Respondent’s website has remained undeveloped for such a long time, but the Respondent has not abandoned the registration of the disputed domain name. It has not submitted in this proceeding any business plan and has not explained how it plans to fill the information portal with relevant content; it has not provided any plausible explanation for the long delay in the implementation of its alleged plan.

³ <https://english.alarabiya.net/business/economy/2017/10/24/Saudi-Public-Investment-Fund-unveils-entertainment-city-logo>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangdong%E2%80%93Hong_Kong%E2%80%93Macao_Greater_Bay_Area

The Panel considers that the Respondent's actual conduct does not support its alleged intentions in respect of the disputed domain name.

The Panel also notes the significant price that was indicated by the Respondent for the sale of the disputed domain name in its correspondence with the Complainant's executive prior to this proceeding. If this price was based on the attractiveness of the geographic name Al-Qiddiya, it does not seem logical that the Respondent abandoned the domain name <al-qiddiya.com>, which would have had the same price, if not higher, being identical to that geographic name. The Panel considers that a more likely explanation why the Respondent indicated such a price for the disputed domain name is that this price reflected the attractiveness of the Complainant's entertainment project, and that it did not consider that the other domain name, which did not directly refer to this project, would be as valuable.

In view of the above considerations, it appears to the Panel that the Respondent has not provided a sincere account of the circumstances surrounding the registration and intended use of the disputed domain name; its explanations appear to have been crafted to blur rather than illuminate the important issues of this dispute. The Panel therefore accepts as more likely than not that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name not because of any claimed geographic significance of "Qiddiya", but with knowledge of and because it refers to the Qiddiya entertainment project that had recently been unveiled and for the implementation of which the Complainant was established not long thereafter. In such scenario, the fact that the disputed domain name was registered prior to the registration of the Complainant's QIDDIYA trademark does not preclude a finding of bad faith conduct by the Respondent. Section 3.8.2 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#). The Panel therefore finds that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and has registered it in bad faith targeting the Complainant's nascent trademark rights.

The fact that the Complainant approached the Respondent prior to this proceeding in an attempt to purchase the disputed domain name does not change the above conclusions. As noted by the Complainant, there is nothing wrong in trademark owners reasonably exploring commercial resolution first for reasons of efficiency, cost, business practicality, or timing, and a commercial approach or purchase inquiry does not necessarily amount to an admission that a respondent has rights or legitimate interests in a domain name. In any case, the email correspondence exchanged between the parties does not show that the Complainant has acknowledged any rights or legitimate interests of the Respondent in the disputed domain name. There is also nothing materially different between reaching an agreement prior to commencing legal proceedings and reaching a settlement after a dispute has arisen, and parties often settle disputes without acknowledging each other's claims. The UDRP encourages and facilitates settlement at every stage of the process, providing a possibility for suspension and termination of proceedings and expedited implementation of settlement agreements, while dispute resolution providers such as the Center offer partial refunds of filing fees if a settlement is reached before the appointment of the panel. As also noted in section 3.10 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), whether settlement discussions occur before or after the filing of a UDRP proceeding is not necessarily relevant by itself.

Turning to the use of the disputed domain name by the Respondent, the Panel notes that it resolves to a landing page with the title "Welcome to Qiddiya City!", which displays the text:

"Coming Soon
Qiddiya City is here for you.
Qiddiya City is open to the world.
Resort, Theme Park, Entertainment, Tours, Culture,
Sports, eSports, Golf, Hotels, Residence, Shopping.
The best hotspot in the world!"

It is obvious that this webpage targets the Complainant's Qiddiya entertainment project. The Respondent has not provided evidence that the disputed domain name has ever resolved to any content related to the alleged historical significance of the terms "Al-Qiddiya" or "Qiddiya". The Panel, taking also into account its considerations about the registration of the disputed domain name, finds that this use of the disputed domain name supports a finding of use in bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

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 <qiddiyacity.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Assen Alexiev/
Assen Alexiev
Presiding Panelist

/Mohamed-Hossam Loutfi/
Mohamed-Hossam Loutfi
Panelist

/Gerald M. Levine/
Gerald M. Levine
Panelist
Date: July 12, 2026