

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Starbucks Corporation v. Shaba Sadiq
Case No. D2026-2508

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Starbucks Corporation, United States of America ("United States"), represented by Focal PLLC, United States.

The Respondent is Shaba Sadiq, Nigeria.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <starbucksfranchiseandlicense.com> is registered with Realtime Register B.V. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on June 10, 2026. On June 10, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 11, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (The RDAP server redacted the value) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 11, 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 amendment to the Complaint on the same date.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the 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 June 12, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 2, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on July 6, 2026.

The Center appointed Nayiri Boghossian as the sole panelist in this matter on July 9, 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

The Complainant is a world-renowned chain of coffee-houses. The Complainant owns many trademark registrations for STARBUCKS such as:

- United States of America registration no. 1,372,630 registered on November 26, 1985;
- United States of America registration no. 1,452,359 registered on August 11, 1987.

The disputed domain name was registered on May 9, 2026, and resolves to a website which purports to offer STARBUCKS franchise licenses.

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 the Complainant's trademark. The disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant's trademark STARBUCKS in its entirety. The addition of other terms does not eliminate confusing similarity. The generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") ".com" is not relevant in the assessment of confusing similarity.

The Complainant contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant's trademark. There is no evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name. The Complainant did not authorize the Respondent to use its trademark in the disputed domain name nor did it grant the Respondent a license. The Respondent appears to be using the disputed domain name to perpetuate fraud by offering counterfeit Starbucks franchise licenses and soliciting sensitive personal and financial information.

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The Complainant's use and registration of its STARBUCKS mark long predated the Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name. The Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant's trademark. This is a case of opportunistic bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

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 of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms here, “franchiseandlicense” may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8.

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. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.1.

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. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant’s prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, claimed phishing and passing off, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

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.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant’s trademark as the Complainant’s trademark is well-known and as the disputed domain name was registered more than forty years after the registration of the Complainant’s trademark. Additionally, the disputed domain name directs to a page, which purports to offer STARBUCKS franchise licenses and displays the Complainant’s trademark and logo.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent’s registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.2.1.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, claimed, phishing and passing off, constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element 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 <starbucksfranchiseandlicense.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Nayiri Boghossian/

Nayiri Boghossian

Sole Panelist

Date: July 21, 2026