ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Carrefour SA v. Andrew Ruecker
Case No. D2026-2680

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Carrefour SA, France, represented by IP Twins SAS, France.

The Respondent is Andrew Ruecker, United Arab Emirates.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <qacarrefour.store> 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 June 19, 2026. On June 19, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 19, 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 (Registration Private/Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 22, 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 June 23, 2026.

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 June 26, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 16, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on July 21, 2026.

The Center appointed Gökhan Gökçe as the sole panelist in this matter on July 24, 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 Carrefour SA, a French multinational retail and wholesaling corporation headquartered in Massy, France. It operates a chain of hypermarkets, grocery stores and convenience stores.

The Complainant operates more than 14.000 stores in more than 40 countries worldwide. With more than 500.000 employees worldwide and millions of daily unique visitors in its stores, the Complainant is a well-known worldwide leader in retail.

The Complainant is the owner of numerous trademark registrations for its CARREFOUR trademark, which predates the registration of the disputed domain name. These include, inter alia:

- International Trademark CARREFOUR, Registration No. 351147, registered on October 2, 1968;
- International Trademark CARREFOUR, Registration No. 353849, registered on February 28, 1969;
- European Union Trademark CARREFOUR, Registration No. 5178371, registered on August 30, 2007;
- United Arab Emirates Trademark CARREFOUR, Registration No. 030547, registered on January 20, 2002.

Pursuant to Annex 5 of the Complaint, the Complainant is also the owner of numerous domain names identical to, or comprising, its trademarks, both within generic and national Top-Level Domains. For instance, <carrefour.com> has been registered since 1995, and <carrefour.fr> since 2005. Additionally, the Complainant is commercially present in the United Arab Emirates, and owns the domain name <carrefouruae.com>.

The disputed domain name was created on June 7, 2026.

The disputed domain name resolves to an inactive page.

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 identical or confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark;
-The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and
-The disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions

6. Discussion and Findings

Paragraph 15(a) of the Rules requires that the Panel's decision be made "on the basis of the statements and documents submitted and in accordance with the Policy, these Rules and any rules and principles of law that it deems applicable". It has been a consensus view in previous UDRP decisions that a respondent's default (i.e., failure to submit a response) would not by itself mean that the complainant is deemed to have prevailed; a respondent's default is not necessarily an admission that the complainant's claims are true (see section 4.3 of WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("WIPO Overview 3.1")).

The Complainant must evidence each of the three elements required by paragraph 4(a) of the Policy in order to succeed on the Complaint, namely that: (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.

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 "qa" may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term 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.

Finally, the addition of a generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") such as ".store" in a domain name is technically required. Thus, it is well established that such an element may typically be disregarded when assessing whether a domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark. See WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.11.1.

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.

On the contrary, it results from the evidence on record that the Complainant's CARREFOUR trademark registration predates the registration of the disputed domain name. There is no evidence in the case record that the Complainant has licensed or otherwise permitted the Respondent to use the CARREFOUR trademark or to register the disputed domain name incorporating this trademark.

The unrebutted evidence shows that:

- the disputed domain name resolves to an inactive webpage, which cannot be deemed as a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use;
- there is no evidence proving that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name;
- the nature of the disputed domain name, incorporating the Complainant's CARREFOUR trademark in its entirety with the geographical term "qa" and the addition of a gTLD such as ".store" (closely relating to the Complainant's core business), carries a risk of implied affiliation with the Complainant. The addition of "qa", can only heighten the risk of confusion and implied affiliation, as the Complainant is commercially present in Qatar through its partnership with United Arab Emirates company Majid Al Futtaim and a dedicated website is accessible at "www.carrefourqatar.com"; and
- no other factors demonstrate the rights or legitimate interests of the Respondent in the disputed domain name.

The Respondent's failure to submit a Response further supports the conclusion that the Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's prima facie case. Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

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 Complainant's rights in the CARREFOUR trademark predate the registration date of the disputed domain name by approximately 58 years. In light of the above as well as of the well-known character of the CARREFOUR trademark, and of the composition of the disputed domain name, the Panel finds that it is not conceivable that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name without knowledge of the Complainant's CARREFOUR trademark, which supports a finding of bad faith registration. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.2.2.

The Complainant further contends that there is no other explanation to register the disputed domain name other than to target the Complainant. Prior UDRP panels have consistently found under the Policy that "the mere registration of a domain name that is identical or confusingly similar […] to a well-known trademark, and particularly in the case of coined or fanciful marks, can by itself create a presumption of bad faith". WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.1.4. Given its CARREFOUR trademark is well-known worldwide, and the disputed domain name incorporates the CARREFOUR trademark in its entirety, the Panel finds bad faith registration based on the Respondent's likely knowledge of the CARREFOUR trademark given its widespread recognition, including in the United Arab Emirates, where the Respondent appears to be located. (see *Carrefour v. Registration Private, Domains by Proxy LLC / Nisar Ahmad Zafar*, WIPO Case No. D2016-2506, *Carrefour v. WhoisGuard, Inc. / Robert Amandin*, WIPO Case No. D2019-0761)

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's CARREFOUR trademark, the composition of the disputed domain name, which reproduces the Complainant's trademark in its entirety together with the prefix "qa" and the ".store" gTLD, the latter being directly related to the Complainant's retail activities. The Panel further notes that the disputed domain name resolves an inactive page and that the Respondent has failed to submit any response or evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use. In these circumstances, the Panel finds that the passive holding of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the Policy (see *Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin, Maison Fondée en 1772 v. The Polygenix Group Co.*, WIPO Case No. D2000-0163).

In addition, the disputed domain name is not associated with any active website. The non-use of a domain name (including a blank or error page) does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding (WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.3.; *Carrefour SA v. Minha loja Admin, Carrefour - Las Mejores Ofertas en Supermercados*, WIPO Case No. D2025-3910).

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.

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 <qacarrefour.store> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Gökhan Gökçe/
Gökhan Gökçe
Sole Panelist
Date: August 7, 2026