ARBITRATION
AND
MEDIATION CENTER

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
Belfius Bank SA / Belfius Bank NV v. Aloha Pacific Federal Credit Union
Case No. D2026-4140

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Belfius Bank SA / Belfius Bank NV, Belgium, represented internally.

The Respondent is Aloha Pacific Federal Credit Union, United States of America, represented by Watanabe Ing LLP, United States of America.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <banklikearebel.online> is registered with Network Solutions, LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on September 15, 2026. On September 16, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On September 16, 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 and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on September 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 September 21, 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 September 23, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 13, 2026. The Response was filed with the Center on October 10, 2026.

The Center appointed Stefan Bojovic as the sole panelist in this matter on October 19, 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 Belgian bank and financial services provider that is 100 per cent owned by the government and that has more than 5,000 employees and over 650 agencies. The activities of the Complainant are focused on the Belgian territory. However, according to the Complainant, the Complainant's trademarks are also visible outside Belgium, since the Complainant sponsors several national sports teams and sports events. The Complainant has developed the investment platform and application under the name "RE=BEL".

The Complainant is the owner of several trademark registrations for RE=BEL, including the following:

- Benelux trademark registration No. 1427730 for RE=BEL, registered on February 2, 2021;
- European Union trademark registration No. 018727168 for RE=BEL, registered on March 18, 2025.

The Complainant also owns the domain names incorporating its RE=BEL trademark, such as <re-bel.be>, registered on March 14, 2022, <rebel-be.com>, registered on February 18, 2021, <rebel-by-belfius.digital>, registered on August 25, 2021 and <www-rebel.com>, registered on June 29, 2021.

The Respondent is a not-for-profit credit union based in the State of Hawaii, the United States of America, founded in 1936. The Respondent currently holds more than USD 1.4 billion in assets and operates on three islands within the State of Hawaii, and has two branches in Nevada. The Respondent does no business outside of the States of Hawaii and Nevada, and does no business outside the United States of America. Rebels CU is a division of the Respondent that opened a branch on the campus of the University of Nevada Las Vegas ("UNLV") to facilitate the financial needs of students attending UNLV. Named after UNLV's Rebels athletic teams and mascot, the Respondent's Rebels CU branch was initially slated to open in the fall of 2025, and commenced operations in January 2026.

The Respondent is the owner of the United States trademark registration No. 8261207 for REBELS CU, registered on May 19, 2026.

The Respondent indicates that it owns a number of domain names that reflect its REBELS CU trademark and that contain the words "rebels" or "rebel", such as <rebelscu.com>, registered on January 7, 2025.

The disputed domain name was registered on July 4, 2025, and at the time the Complaint was filed it resolved to an inactive page. At the time of this decision, the disputed domain name resolves to a parking page with sponsored (pay-per-click or PPC) links which state that the page is under construction.

Before initiating the present proceedings, on August 17, 2026, the Complainant sent a cease-and-desist letter to the abuse email of the Registrar. According to the Complainant, no response to such letter was received.

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 incorporates its RE=BEL trademark in its entirety, with the omission of the equal sign (=), which cannot be included in domain names, and the addition of the descriptive term “bank”. According to the Complainant, the addition of this term does not lessen the confusing similarity but rather strengthens the association with the Complainant and its RE=BEL investment application. The Complainant further submits that the applicable gTLD is to be disregarded for the purpose of the comparison and that the disputed domain name is likely to lead Internet users to assume that the associated website offers services supplied by the Complainant.

With reference to rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name, the Complainant contends that the Respondent is in no way associated with the Complainant, and that it has never licensed, approved, or otherwise consented to the Respondent’s registration and use of the RE=BEL trademark in the disputed domain name. The Complainant further states that the Respondent has no trademark rights in RE=BEL and does not appear to carry out any activity that would justify the adoption of this word combination. Moreover, the Complainant submits that the Respondent is not making any legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name, nor is there any evidence of demonstrable preparations to use it in connection with an active website. In this respect, the Complainant argues that the passive holding or non-use of a domain name may, in appropriate circumstances, constitute evidence of a lack of rights or legitimate interests.

With reference to the circumstances evidencing bad faith, the Complainant contends that the Respondent knew or should have known of the Complainant’s RE=BEL trademark, which had been registered prior to the registration of the disputed domain name. The Complainant submits that, had the Respondent conducted good-faith searches before registering the disputed domain name, it would readily have found references to the Complainant and its trademark. The Complainant further argues that the incorporation of the RE=BEL trademark in its entirety, together with the addition of the descriptive term “bank”, which directly relates to the Complainant’s banking business and RE=BEL investment application, indicates that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant and its trademark. With regard to use in bad faith, the Complainant states that the disputed domain name does not resolve to an active website and that there is no evidence of any legitimate business or service, or of any intention to make bona fide use of the disputed domain name. The Complainant further relies on the Respondent’s concealment of its identity through a privacy protection service, its failure to respond to the cease-and-desist notice, and the absence of any plausible good-faith use of the disputed domain name. In that sense, the Complainant invokes the passive holding doctrine, arguing that the incorporation of its trademark within the disputed domain name, the concealment of the Respondent’s identity, the failure to respond to the cease-and-desist letter, and the absence of any conceivable good-faith use support a finding of bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent contends that the Complainant has not satisfied all three of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

The Respondent contends that the disputed domain name is neither identical nor confusingly similar to the Complainant’s RE=BEL trademark. The Respondent argues that the Complainant’s trademark is RE=BEL, not REBEL, and that the disputed domain name does not incorporate the Complainant’s trademark in its entirety or contain it as a dominant feature. In this regard, the Respondent points out that, although the equal sign (=) cannot be included in a domain name, a hyphen is an accepted character and the disputed domain name does not include the hyphenated term “re-bel”, which appears in several of the Complainant’s domain names. The Respondent further submits that the term “rebel” does not dominate the disputed domain name, as it appears at the end of a string of words, whereas the term “bank” appears first. It also argues that the expressions RE=BEL and “rebel” are phonetically distinguishable, as the former would most likely be pronounced with a long first vowel, while the latter would be pronounced with a short “e” sound. The Respondent adds that RE=BEL is intended to stand for “Resolute Belfius”, in connection with the Complainant’s investment platform, and not “rebel”. Moreover, the Respondent argues that the disputed domain name must be considered as a whole, including the words “Bank Like a”, which are absent from the Complainant’s trademark, and that the differences between the disputed domain name and the trademark

outweigh any similarities. The Respondent further submits that the Complainant has provided no evidence that its RE=BEL mark is well-known and that the Complainant's target consumers do not have English as their first language, making it even less likely that they would associate the disputed domain name with the Complainant's trademark.

Regarding the second UDRP element, the Respondent contends that it has rights and legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name on two independent grounds. First, the Respondent submits that, before receiving notice of the dispute from Network Solutions' Abuse Department, it had made substantial use of the term "Rebels" in connection with the bona fide offering of services under its Rebels CU brand. In this regard, the Respondent explains that it established the Rebels CU division in 2025 and opened a branch on the UNLV campus in January 2026, in order to facilitate the financial needs of UNLV students. The Respondent states that the name "Rebels" was chosen by reference to UNLV's long-standing Rebels mascot and athletic teams, whose name dates back to the university's origins in the mid-1950s. Second, the Respondent relies on its United States trademark registration for REBELS CU, registered on May 19, 2026, in respect of credit union services. The Respondent further refers to the Complainant's own submission that a registered trademark provides a clear indication of ownership of rights in the trademark, and submits that its trademark registration supports its claim to rights and legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

With respect to the third UDRP element, the Respondent denies that the disputed domain name was registered or is being used in bad faith. It argues that neither its use of a privacy service nor the fact that the disputed domain name has been parked since registration, whether considered separately or together, justifies a finding of bad faith. In this regard, the Respondent submits that the use of privacy services is not, without additional circumstances, evidence of bad faith, and points out that its use of such a service did not prevent it from receiving notice of the Complaint or the Complainant from learning its identity after the filing of the Complaint. It further states that there is no evidence that it provided false contact information. The Respondent also argues that the circumstances relevant to the passive holding doctrine are absent, noting, in particular, that the Complainant has not established the distinctiveness or reputation of its mark, that the Respondent has submitted a Response and evidence of its contemplated good-faith use, and that there is no evidence of active steps to conceal its identity or of false or inaccurate contact details. The Respondent maintains that it adopted the Rebels CU name and mark for the purpose of opening a branch on the UNLV campus, that the name was selected by reference to the university's mascot and athletic teams, and that the disputed domain name was registered together with other domain names containing the words "rebel" or "rebels" for use in connection with the Rebels CU business. The Respondent further asserts that neither it nor its management was aware of the Complainant or its RE=BEL trademark before receiving the notification from Network Solutions' Abuse Department. It also points out that the parties operate in geographically separate markets, as the Respondent does business only in Hawaii and Nevada, while the Complainant is located in Belgium, and argues that neither party is legally eligible to provide financial services in the other's geographic area. Finally, the Respondent submits that there is no objective evidence that the disputed domain name was registered to deprive the Complainant of its use of the trademark or to misappropriate its business, and that none of the circumstances listed in paragraph 4(b) of the Policy is present in this case.

6. Discussion and Findings

According to paragraph 15(a) of the Rules: "A Panel shall decide a complaint 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." Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy stipulates that the complainant must prove each of the following:

(i) that the disputed domain name registered by the respondent is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the complainant has rights;

(ii) that the respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and

(iii) that 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 Complainant's RE=BEL trademark cannot be represented in its entirety in a domain name, as it contains an equal sign (=) which is not a supported character in domain names. Nevertheless, the Complainant's trademark can be transliterated as "rebel" or "re-bel" within a domain name, by using the available characters. The Panel finds the Complainant's trademark is recognizable within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, sections 1.7 and 1.14.

Although the addition of other terms (here, "bank", "like" and "a") 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.

In addition, it is well established that ".online", as a gTLD, is disregarded in the assessment of the confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the trademark. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.11.1.

The Panel notes the Respondent's arguments regarding the dissimilarity of the Complainant's trademark with the disputed domain name. However, the Panel underlines that, in accordance with above-indicated reasoning, the Complainant's trademark is still recognizable within the disputed domain name and that the disputed domain name is therefore confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark.

The Panel, therefore, finds that 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.

In the present case, the Respondent did provide a Response, rebutting the Complainant's arguments and providing relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

Both parties are in banking and finance business, and in accordance with the evidence available to the Panel, they operate within different geographical markets. In particular, the Complainant operates in Belgium as a bank under the name Belfius Bank, while the Respondent operates a not-for-profit credit union under the name Aloha Pacific Federal Credit Union in the States of Hawaii and Nevada in the United States.

It is important to emphasize that RE=BEL and REBELS CU trademarks of the Complainant and the Respondent are not their main brands and are used in connection with specific services. Namely, the Complainant is using its RE=BEL trademark for the investment platform and application, while the Respondent is using its REBELS CU trademark for its branch on the campus of the UNLV. The Panel holds that this distinction is important as it indicates that both parties are better known by their respective business names, while their trademarks are used only in relation to specific, recently launched services that have narrow geographical reach. For that reason, the Panel holds that it is entirely plausible that both parties are conducting their legitimate businesses unaware of each other and in particular unaware of each other's trademarks.

The Panel notes that the Respondent has provided sufficient evidence that it owns the registered trademark REBELS CU in the United States, which, when considered together with its business activities under that name, supports its claim of rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Panel understands that the disputed domain name contains the term "rebel", which is not identical with the Respondent's REBELS CU trademark. Nevertheless, the Panel understands that the term "rebel" represents a variation of the most distinctive portion of the Respondent's trademark (in fact, a singular of the term "rebels") and as such can be perceived as a name correspondent to the disputed domain. Panels have recognized that a respondent's prior registration of a trademark which corresponds to a domain name will ordinarily support a finding of rights or legitimate interests in that domain name for purposes of the second element. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.12.1.

The Panel is also mindful of the fact that the Respondent's REBELS CU trademark and business branch under the same name postdate the Complainant's trademark for several years. However, in the present case, the Panel holds that circumstances of this case are such that it is more likely than not that the parties are conducting their business on different continents unaware of each other and that the Respondent's registration of REBELS CU trademark was not made with intention to circumvent the Complainant's assertion of its rights or otherwise prevent the Complainant's exercise of its rights. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.12.2.

Although the disputed domain name was not put in genuine use, such inactivity does not in itself indicate that the Respondent does not intend to use the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. The Respondent has sufficiently demonstrated that it runs legitimate business and provides legitimate services under the REBELS CU trademark since January 2026. In that context, registration of the disputed domain name, together with other domain names containing the terms "rebel" or "rebels", as indicated by the Respondent, cannot be considered separately from the services provided by the Respondent. The Panel, therefore, finds that, in the circumstances of this case, the Respondent has sufficiently demonstrated that the registration of the disputed domain name formed part of its preparations to use domain names incorporating the terms "rebel" or "rebels" in connection with its bona fide offering of services under the REBELS CU trademark. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.2.

Having in mind the above, the Panel finds the second element of the Policy has not 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.

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.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent operates a not-for-profit credit union in the States of Hawaii and Nevada in the United States and uses its REBELS CU trademark in connection with its branch on the campus of the UNLV. As indicated above, the Respondent appears to be operating a legitimate

business under the REBELS CU trademark. The parties operate in geographically distinct markets, with the Complainant's activities focused on Belgium and the Respondent's activities limited to the States of Hawaii and Nevada in the United States. Furthermore, the Respondent has also provided a credible explanation for its choice of the name "Rebels", referring to the name of UNLV's athletic teams and mascot. In view of these circumstances, and in the absence of evidence indicating that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant or its RE=BEL trademark at the time of registration, the Panel finds that it is unlikely that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name with the Complainant and its trademark in mind.

In accordance with the above, the evidence in the case file as presented does not indicate that the Respondent's aim in registering the disputed domain name was to profit from or exploit the Complainant's trademark.

With regard to the use of the disputed domain name in bad faith, the Panel finds that the circumstances of the present case do not warrant the application of the passive holding doctrine. In particular, the Respondent has provided a credible explanation for the registration of the disputed domain name, supported by evidence of its genuine business activities under the REBELS CU name. Although the disputed domain name has not been put to active use, the Panel considers that, in the circumstances of this case, its non-use does not provide sufficient grounds for a finding of bad faith. The Respondent's explanation also provides a plausible basis for a future good-faith use of the disputed domain name in connection with its business.

The Panel has also considered the fact that, at the time of this Decision, the disputed domain name resolves to a parking page with sponsored (pay-per-click or PPC) links and a notice that the page is under construction. However, in the absence of any evidence indicating that such links target the Complainant or its trademark, the Panel does not consider that this circumstance alters the above conclusion.

The Panel finds the third element of the Policy has not been established.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, the Complaint is denied.

/Stefan Bojovic/
Stefan Bojovic
Sole Panelist
Date: November 2, 2026