ARBITRATION
AND
MEDIATION CENTER

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
TAS Rights Management, LLC v. fatih akinci
Case No. D2026-4167

1. The Parties

The Complainant is TAS Rights Management, LLC, United States of America ("US" or "United Stated"), represented by Venable, LLP, United States.

The Respondent is fatih akinci, Türkiye.

2. The Domain Names and Registrar

The disputed domain names <taylorswifterastourmerch.store> and <taylorswiftmerchshop.store> are registered with Spaceship, Inc. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on September 16, 2026. On September 17, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On September 17, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain names which differed from the named Respondent ("Privacy service provided by WITHHELD FOR PRIVACY LLC"), and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on September 18, 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 September 18, 2026.

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 September 21, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 11, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on October 14, 2026.

The Center appointed William A. Van Caenegem 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.

The Center's verification revealed that both disputed domain names are owned by the same Respondent.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant, TAS Rights Management, LLC is the intellectual property management company for musical artist Taylor Swift. It is the owner of the TAYLOR SWIFT trademarks in numerous international classes in countries around the world. The Complainant also owns 36 registrations featuring the trademark with THE ERAS TOUR including TAYLOR SWIFT THE ERAS TOUR US Reg. No. 8014270, registered on November 4, 2025 in Int. Cl.: 9, 41; US Registration No. 8014271 registered on November 4, 2025 in Int. Cl.: 18, 25, 35; Canada Registration No. TMA1336783 registered on August 1, 2025 in Int. Cl.; 9, 14; 16; 18; 22; 24; 25; 28; 35 and 41; and International registration for TAYLOR SWIFT No. 1147583 registered on January 18, 2013 in Int. Cl. 25, designating Türkiye amongst others.

The disputed domain name <taylorswifterastourmerch.store> was registered on May 24, 2026, and the disputed domain name <taylorswiftmerchshop.store> was registered on June 5, 2026.

The Complainant operates a website at "www.taylorswift.com" featuring photographs and videos, as well as links to social media accounts and a link to the Complainant's merchandise store at "www.store.taylorswift.com". Fans of Taylor Swift follow the artist on social media platforms including, Facebook (over 78 million), Instagram (over 273 million), X (over 83 million), and YouTube (over 63 million).

The two disputed domain names are owned by the same registrant and previously resolved to identical websites offering escort services in Türkiye.

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 names.

The Complainant contends that "Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour" is well-known worldwide and is the highest grossing concert tour of all time, with a film of it being the highest grossing film in box office history among concert and documentary films. The Complainant says that it uses TAYLOR SWIFT marks on a wide variety of products including but not limited to musical recordings, apparel, accessories, jewelry, handbags, wallets, backpacks, home goods, paper products, and blankets among other goods and services. The Complainant argues that as a result of the long-term, continuous and extensive use, advertising, and promotion of the marks by the Complainant and the global success of Taylor Swift, the Complainant's marks have developed a significant value, image, and reputation, and have become well-known trademarks in the entertainment industry and to consumers throughout the world.

The Complainant points out that the disputed domain names incorporate the entirety of the TAYLOR SWIFT trademark and the disputed domain name <taylorswifterastourmerch.store> incorporates the entirety of that trademark with the additional portion ERAS TOUR, which is nearly identical to the Complainant's registered trademark for TAYLOR SWIFT THE ERAS TOUR, with only the inconsequential omission of the word "the."

The Complainant contends that the mere addition of non-distinctive terms like “merch” or “shop” to its trademarks and the minor omission of the word “the” from the TAYLOR SWIFT THE ERAS TOUR trademark does not otherwise avoid confusing similarity. In any case, the Complainant says that its marks are so well-known that consumers are likely to reasonably assume that a domain name containing the term TAYLOR SWIFT or TAYLOR SWIFT ERAS TOUR may be owned by, or associated with, the Complainant. This is especially the case, the Complainant maintains, where such TAYLOR SWIFT disputed domain names pair the infringing trademark use with generic terms such as “shop” or “merch,” as Taylor Swift’s authentic merchandise website is also online and “merch store” and/or “merch shop” is a common way to refer to it.

The Complainant asserts that there is no evidence that the Respondent uses the disputed domain names in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services, as they were being used to offer escort services.

The Respondent registered the disputed domain names on May 24, 2026, and June 5, 2026, respectively. At that time, the Complainant points out, its trademarks were already well-known within the multimedia entertainment industry and among consumers throughout the world. The Complainant adds that its TAYLOR SWIFT marks have been used in the United States since at least as early as 2000 and have been registered in the United States since at least as early as 2008.

The Complainant says its marks are distinctive trademarks. They have no meaning other than as a reference to the artist and her goods and services. In view of this, it can be inferred according to the Complainant that the disputed domain names would not have been registered but for the renown of its marks. There is no evidence of non-commercial fair use with the disputed domain names, the Complainant says, and the sole purpose of the websites associated with the disputed domain names was at the time to offer escort services. The Complainant says that at no time did the Respondent have authorization to register the disputed domain names. To the best knowledge of the Complainant, the Respondent has no legitimate right or interest in the latter. In any case, the Complainant argues that based upon the hundreds of trademark registrations, as well as the fame, goodwill and notoriety associated with Taylor Swift, it is impossible to conceive of a circumstance in which the Respondent could make any legitimate use of the disputed domain names.

The Complainant also argues that the Respondent’s registration of the disputed domain names, incorporating as they do its the world-famous marks is sufficient to establish the Respondent’s bad faith. The registration and use of the disputed domain names in connection with escort services is particularly damaging to it, to Taylor Swift and to the latter’s brand. Taylor Swift is popular amongst consumers of all ages, and it is a serious concern that her fans may access the disputed domain names and be unintentionally exposed to escort services, the Complainant points out. It is clear according to the Complainant, that the Respondent registered the disputed domain names at a time when the Respondent knew or should have known of the value of the Complainant’s marks and their distinctive quality, and that the Respondent is intentionally utilizing the Complainant’s marks to deceive consumers and disrupt the Complainant’s business. In either case, Respondent’s bad faith is indisputable, the Complainant concludes, given the strength and fame of its registered trademarks.

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 the trademarks TAYLOR SWIFT and TAYLOR SWIFT THE ERAS TOUR for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.2.1.

The Panel finds the marks are recognizable within the disputed domain names. Accordingly, the disputed domain names are confusingly similar to the marks for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.7. Although the addition of other terms here, "merch" and "merch shop" respectively 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 names 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 names. 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 names such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

The Complainant has not authorized the use in any form by the Respondent of its registered trademarks. There is nothing to indicate that the Respondent is known by the disputed domain names or the registered trademarks or had acquired valid legal rights in the latter prior to registration of the disputed domain names.

The use of another party's distinctive and renowned trademarks for the purpose of operating an unrelated commercial website is not of a kind that results in the recognition of rights or legitimate interests. The incorporation of the Complainant's trademarks into disputed domain names in the present case seeks to mislead Internet users into thinking that they resolve to websites that offer legitimate merchandise of the Complainant. Such deceptive use 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 has chosen to acquire the disputed domain names that incorporate the very distinctive, almost unmistakable registered trademarks of the Complainant. It is inconceivable, given also the composition of the disputed domain names, that the Respondent did this unwittingly and in ignorance of the rights of the Complainant.

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 this case, causing the disputed domain names to resolve to websites that offer escort services in Türkiye, obviously indicates that the disputed domain names were not only registered but also used in bad faith, relying on deceit. In any case, it is almost inconceivable that any party other than the Complainant could put the disputed domain names to good faith use.

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 names <taylorswifterastourmerch.store> and <taylorswiftmerchshop.store> be transferred to the Complainant.

/William A. Van Caenegem/
William A. Van Caenegem
Sole Panelist
Date: November 2, 2026.