

Statistics of civil cases for debt August 2004

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Key figures for the month ended August 2004

	August 2004	% change between August 2003 and August 2004	% change between June 2003 to August 2003 and June 2004 to August 2004	% change between January 2003 to August 2003 and January 2004 to August 2004
Actual estimates				
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	116 046	-18,4	-21,2	-14,7
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	77 626	-22,6	-26,4	-17,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	614,1	-11,1	-15,4	-6,9

	August 2004	% change between July 2004 and August 2004	% change between March 2004 to May 2004 and June 2004 to August 2004
Seasonally adjusted estimates			
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	112 417	1,8	-6,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	71 410	6,4	-14,5
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	570,8	3,3	-8,2

Key findings as at the end of August 2004

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended August 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 6,8% compared with the previous three months. The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended August 2004 decreased by 21,2% compared with the three months ended August 2003. Furthermore, the total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the first eight months of 2004 decreased by 14,7% compared with the first eight months of 2003.

The major contributors to the decrease of 21,2% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended August 2004 compared with the three months ended August 2003 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (-7,7 percentage points), 'other' debts (-5,8 percentage points), goods sold on open account (-2,2 percentage points), and 'other services' (-2,2 percentage points).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended August 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 14,5% compared with the previous three months. The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended August 2004 decreased by 26,4% compared with the three months ended August 2003. Furthermore, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first eight months of 2004 decreased by 17,3% compared with the first eight months of 2003.

The major contributors to the decrease of 26,4% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended August 2004 compared with the three months ended August 2003 were civil judgements in respect of money lent (-13,0 percentage points), 'other' debts (-4,0 percentage points), instalment sale transactions (-3,3 percentage points) and goods sold on open account (-3,0 percentage points).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

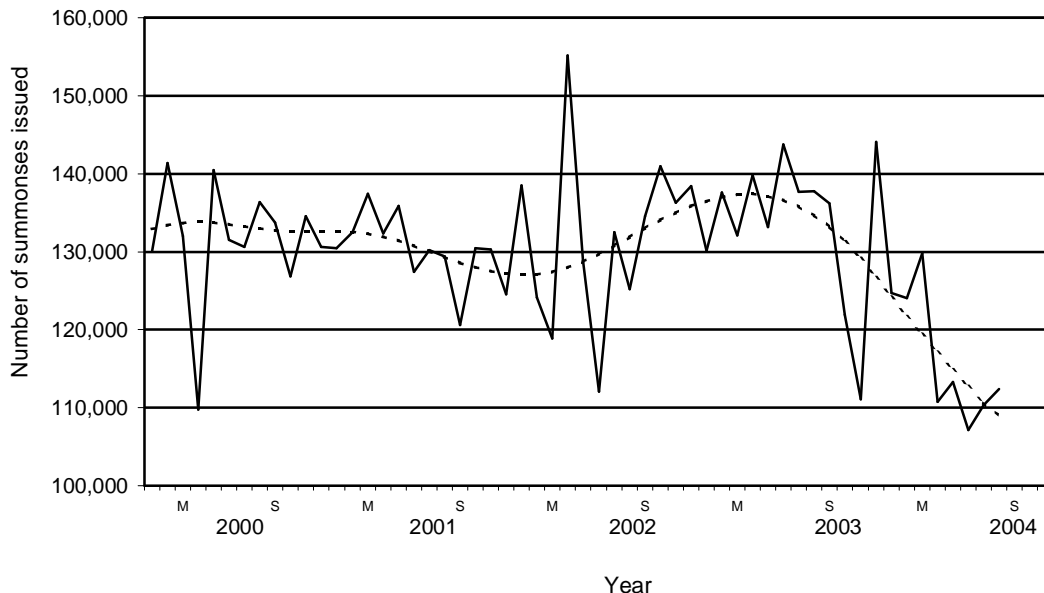
The value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended August 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 8,2% compared with the previous three months. The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended August 2004 decreased by 15,4% compared with the three months ended August 2003. Furthermore, the value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first eight months of 2004 decreased by 6,9% compared with the first eight months of 2003.

The major contributor to the decrease of 15,4% in the value of civil judgements recorded for the three months ended August 2004 compared with the three months ended August 2003 was civil judgements recorded in respect of money lent (-12,8 percentage points).

During August 2004, 77 626 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R614,1 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R614,1 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R191,4 million or 31,2%), 'other' debts (R163,0 million or 26,5%) and 'other services' (R71,6 million or 11,7%) (see table 4 column 5).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded from 2000 to 2004

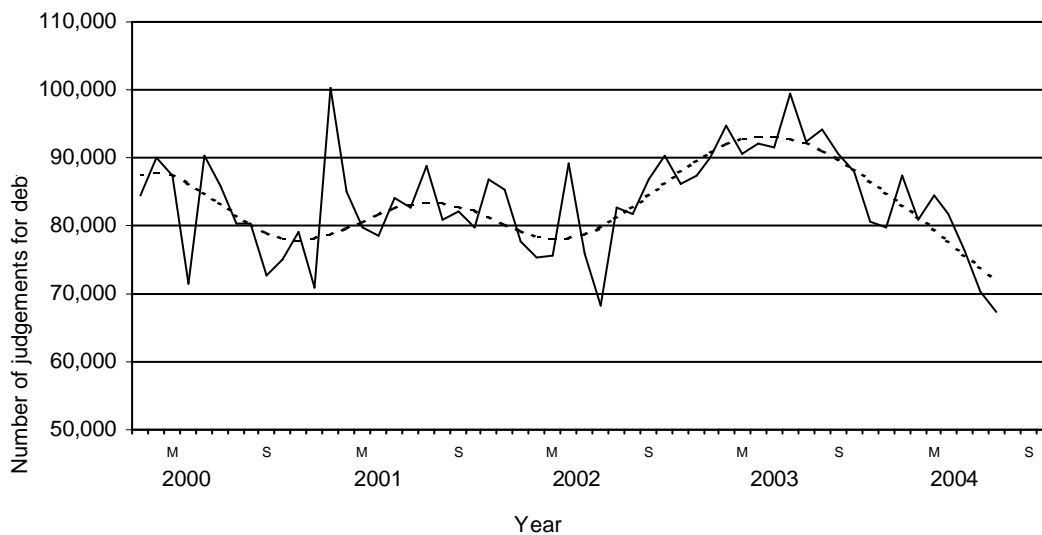
Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt



Source : Stats SA

— Seasonally adjusted - - - - Trend

Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



Source : Stats SA

— Seasonally adjusted - - - - Trend

**PP
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Statistician-General**

Notes

Forthcoming issue	Issue	Expected release date
	September 2004	25 November 2004
Purpose of the survey	The survey of Civil Cases for Debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa, excluding the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states). This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.	
Response rate	The response rate for August 2004 was 81,0%.	

Contents

	Page
Notes	4
Tables	
Table 1 Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	6
Table 2 Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices	7
Table 3 Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	8
Table 4 Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons ...	9
Explanatory notes	10
Glossary	12
General information	14

Table1 - Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprise and private persons				Private persons			
	2003	2003 August	2004 July	2004 August	2003	2003 August	2004 July	2004 August
1 Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 801 274	157 303	136 712	132 803	1 671 791	146 217	125 928	123 239
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		155 722	129 186	131 413		144 319	118 994	121 785
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	209 016	17 467	15 592	14 642	186 204	15 524	13 594	13 245
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	52 568	6 071	4 770	4 081	48 169	5 602	4 322	3 767
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	165 715	15 103	13 490	14 641	157 675	14 272	12 632	13 920
2.2.2 Other	272 603	22 749	21 161	21 604	252 824	21 299	19 778	19 915
2.3 Rent	79 342	6 161	5 198	3 827	65 329	4 938	3 974	2 888
2.4 Money lent	417 605	34 905	27 080	26 049	405 557	33 945	26 058	25 209
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	132 743	12 737	11 483	10 134	123 156	11 806	10 604	9 163
2.6 Other	270 276	27 059	21 439	21 068	247 876	25 146	19 450	19 680
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 599 868	142 252	120 213	116 046	1 486 791	132 534	110 414	107 787
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		137 728	110 395	112 417		127 845	101 569	104 101

Table 2- Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

Year or month	Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East-London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2002	200 806	98 361	32 159	20 667	39 642	135 995	150 355	74 363	42 837	162 978	29 548	42 588
2003	184 499	86 919	37 534	26 953	30 153	131 913	183 463	78 614	53 072	145 245	33 818	71 882
2003 -J	14 177	7 468	2 485	4 755	2 845	8 389	8 967	4 122	4 833	14 363	1 908	4 578
F	16 617	9 707	3 828	2 028	2 708	11 544	12 822	6 445	5 998	16 259	2 819	6 164
M	16 204	10 104	3 091	2 017	2 941	11 797	14 690	8 256	5 724	12 175	3 475	6 164
A	15 395	6 154	2 564	2 017	3 284	11 414	11 964	7 229	3 321	13 075	2 544	6 687
M	15 663	7 849	2 999	2 017	3 532	13 239	14 584	7 746	4 515	15 954	2 499	6 717
J	14 038	6 813	3 472	2 017	2 276	12 049	19 623	7 395	4 213	12 343	2 113	8 446
J	16 709	7 379	3 584	2 017	2 426	11 438	18 292	8 742	4 731	13 751	3 394	9 502
A	15 263	6 345	2 921	2 017	2 539	11 528	17 204	6 545	4 861	11 187	4 042	9 418
S	15 414	6 477	2 918	2 017	1 841	10 367	16 802	5 611	4 448	11 275	1 854	3 035
O	15 798	5 764	2 918	2 017	2 401	11 321	16 231	6 024	4 288	9 855	3 293	5 282
N	15 315	6 869	3 925	2 017	1 518	7 403	16 231	6 028	4 003	7 602	3 021	3 285
D	13 906	5 990	2 829	2 017	1 842	11 424	16 053	4 471	2 137	7 406	2 856	2 604
2004 -J	13 627	7 634	2 149	1 370	1 249	8 053	14 070	5 493	3 745	11 949	1 568	3 417
F	15 167	6 921	2 149	1 957	1 713	9 997	16 006	6 014	5 127	11 989	2 513	4 337
M	12 787	10 896	3 587	1 957	2 427	10 711	17 689	9 544	5 759	12 922	2 827	3 945
A	10 087	5 786	2 243	1 957	1 215	8 415	11 018	5 510	3 806	7 605	2 252	4 542
M	11 545	8 252	3 521	1 957	1 712	11 633	14 059	7 474	4 564	9 739	2 504	4 542
J	12 390	3 174	3 521	790	1 682	11 346	12 525	6 408	4 375	9 692	1 442	4 542
J	12 988	3 174	4 850	1 100	2 052	10 239	14 059	5 847	4 347	10 652	2 015	5 292
A	11 424	7 185	3 034	1 100	1 663	10 867	14 059	8 433	4 750	9 826	2 021	5 676

Table 3 - Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprise and private persons				Private persons			
	2003	2003 August	2004 July	2004 August	2003	2003 August	2004 July	2004 August
1 Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	141 959	11 510	10 118	10 972	130 779	10 638	9 351	10 069
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	33 293	2 259	1 256	1 138	31 280	2 132	1 117	1 013
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	84 324	6 424	6 304	7 365	80 648	5 312	6 070	6 889
1.2.2 Other	139 914	11 238	11 223	12 486	131 607	10 461	10 531	11 688
1.3 Rent	52 190	4 876	2 897	3 811	49 615	4 139	2 224	2 828
1.4 Money lent	389 269	43 272	26 839	25 368	363 367	29 861	26 525	24 820
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	99 998	9 306	8 100	7 752	96 461	9 025	7 808	7 488
1.6 Other	144 846	11 397	8 618	8 734	133 024	10 529	7 976	8 065
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	1 085 793	100 282	75 355	77 626	1 029 783	96 096	71 603	72 860
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		92 547	67 141	71 410		89 078	63 906	67 331

Table 4 - Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprise and private persons				Private persons			
	2003	2003 August	2004 July	2004 August	2003	2003 August	2004 July	2004 August
R' 000								
1 Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	761 616	110 386	46 847	54 102	637 224	97 863	36 416	44 398
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	282 935	25 925	26 503	22 622	231 641	23 027	21 155	18 892
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	213 641	21 674	38 244	23 687	197 073	20 134	36 104	17 153
1.2.2 Other	634 169	49 963	64 473	71 622	571 847	44 296	55 085	62 758
1.3 Rent	300 680	25 294	27 631	29 322	250 426	19 094	20 540	22 168
1.4 Money lent	3 050 038	227 116	168 572	191 394	2 858 101	218 760	161 886	185 898
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	917 163	99 328	56 707	58 323	853 522	90 650	52 091	53 132
1.6 Other	1 569 427	130 693	176 567	163 014	1 256 410	97 484	119 638	87 443
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 729 669	690 379	605 544	614 086	6 856 245	611 307	502 916	491 842
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		640 881	552 320	570 783		564 607	471 936	455 170

Explanatory notes

- Introduction**
- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.
 - 2 Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejectment orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
- Scope of the survey**
- 3 This survey covers -
 - Number of civil cases recorded;
 - Number of civil summonses issued for debt;
 - Number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and
 - Value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
- Statistical unit**
- 4 The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.
 - 5 The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 152 magistrates offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as the measure of size.
- Survey methodology and design**
- 6 The survey is conducted by mail each month for approximately 152 magistrates' offices.
- Seasonal adjustment**
- 7 Seasonal adjustment (variation) is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. This means the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour.
- Trend cycle**
- 8 Smoothed seasonally adjusted estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
- Publications**
- 9 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:
 - *Bulletin of Statistics* issued quarterly.
 - *SA Statistics* issued annually.

Unpublished statistics

- 10** In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published. The statistics can be made available in one or more of the following ways: computer printout, CD or diskette. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.

Symbols and abbreviations

- 11** R/D Refer to Drawer
CD Compact Disc
Stats SA Statistics South Africa
TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei.

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor in which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for a debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. a loan agreement.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transactions relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	“Other services” refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel-beaters and electricians.
Other debts	“Other debts” refers to all other kinds of outstanding debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect of television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat levies.

Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refers to medical doctors/dentists, advocates/attorneys, auditors/ accountants, architects, engineers and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory notes are written notes, signed by one person, in which he promises to pay money to another person, or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/D Cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

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