

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Summary of findings: Statistics of civil cases for debt

Table A – Key figures for the month of August 2010

Actual estimates	August 2010	% change between August 2009 and August 2010	% change between June to August 2009 and June to August 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	111 498	-11,8	-13,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	53 799	-20,9	-9,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	508,2	-22,5	-13,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The three months ended August 2010 reflected a 13,8% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the three months ended August 2009. A decrease of 11,8% was recorded between August 2009 and August 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 13,8% decrease in the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended August 2010 compared with the three months ended August 2009 were:

- the civil summonses issued for promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -4,5 percentage points);
- the money lent category (contributing -4,4 percentage points); and
- the goods sold category (contributing -2,6 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended August 2010 decreased by 9,2% compared with the three months ended August 2009. A decrease of 20,9% was recorded between August 2009 and August 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements for money lent (contributing -6,1 percentage points) and goods sold (contributing -3,5 percentage points) were the drivers behind the 9,2% decrease (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 13,1% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended August 2010 compared with the three months ended August 2009. A decrease of 22,5% was recorded between August 2009 and August 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 13,1% decrease in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended August 2010 compared with the three months ended August 2009 were:

- the money lent category (contributing -6,9 percentage points);
- the goods sold category (contributing -3,4 percentage points); and
- the services category (contributing -2,0 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During August 2010, 53 799 civil judgements for debt amounting to R508,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R508,2 million were:

- money lent (R149,8 million or 29,5%);
- 'other debts' (R98,8 million or 19,4%);
- services (R82,9 million or 16,3%); and
- goods sold (R79,5 million or 15,6%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt respectively from January 2005 to August 2010.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

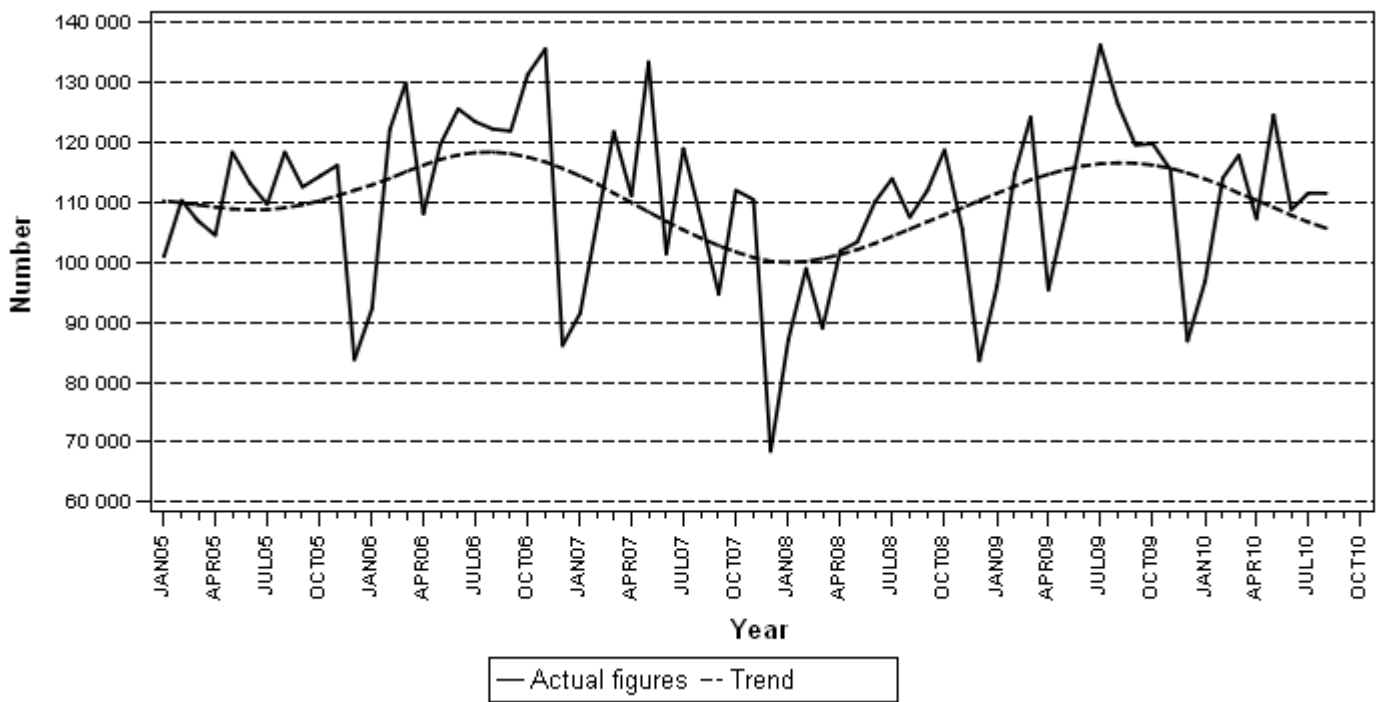
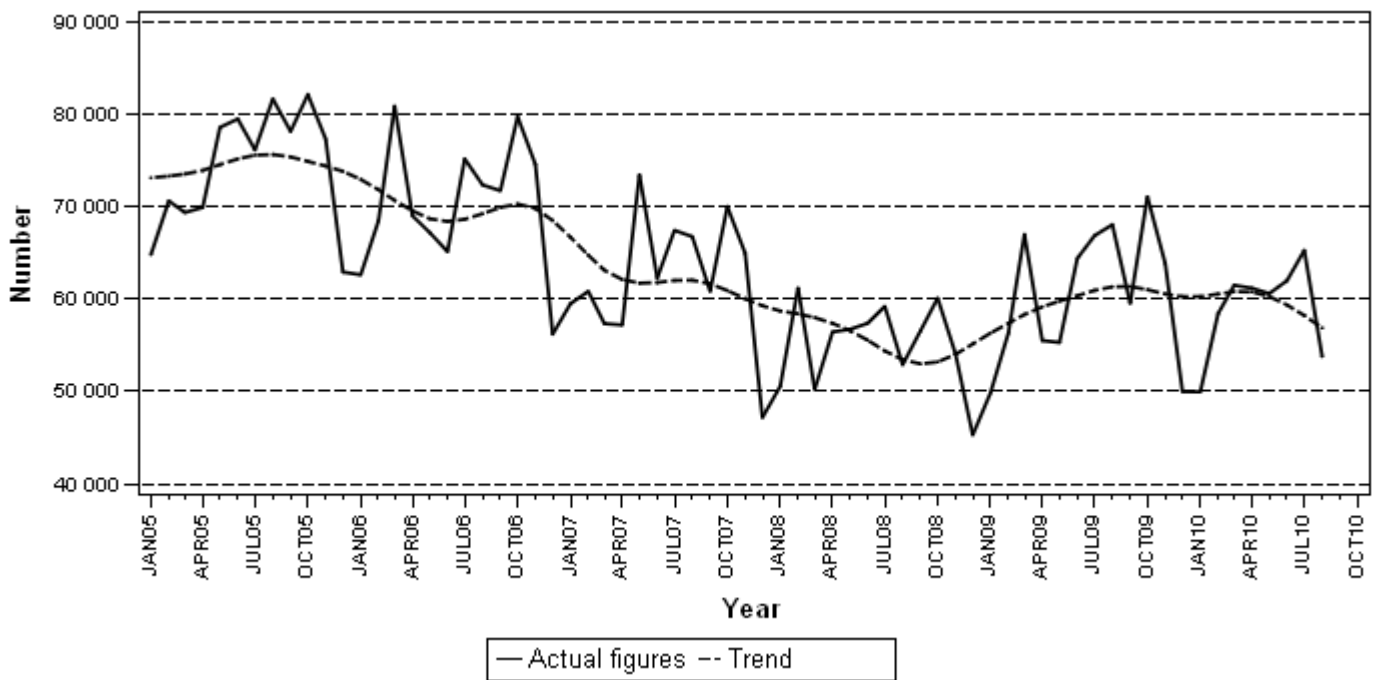


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		August	July	August		August	July	August
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	146 667	127 502	124 055	1 420 316	130 839	114 814	108 890
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		140 999	116 770	118 961		125 621	104 130	104 239
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	12 128	9 410	8 709	112 717	9 955	7 732	6 821
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	2 925	2 853	2 497	30 583	2 483	2 521	2 167
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	13 957	12 893	12 850	128 153	11 888	11 471	11 405
2.2.2 Other	164 618	15 322	15 265	13 915	142 316	13 353	13 380	11 988
2.3 Rent	51 389	4 590	4 206	4 491	43 153	3 853	3 390	3 738
2.4 Money lent	326 092	30 583	25 575	26 327	308 583	28 950	23 962	24 772
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	23 679	19 512	20 200	227 360	22 064	18 278	18 976
2.6 Other debts	256 599	23 176	21 813	22 509	210 475	19 229	19 295	18 171
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	126 360	111 527	111 498	1 203 340	111 775	100 029	98 038
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		120 453	100 671	106 099		107 130	89 898	93 790

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Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates’ offices

Year and month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pieter-maritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2008	Year Total	117 171	54 474	17 553	7 236	19 284	78 092	205 869	59 060	33 410	138 384	26 859	33 374
2009	Year Total	134 632	43 416	18 080	8 026	21 618	91 171	260 137	54 501	38 110	152 361	24 302	40 531
	January	8 353	1 955	1 259	515	1 713	7 400	20 427	5 126	2 299	10 835	1 265	4 435
	February	10 331	3 211	1 619	795	1 557	7 766	22 126	5 592	2 742	12 559	1 449	3 645
	March	14 242	5 191	1 759	755	1 807	7 604	20 163	5 618	4 660	14 922	2 339	3 728
	April	9 791	3 286	1 384	538	1 403	7 336	18 223	4 108	2 668	9 863	1 671	2 494
	May	11 016	3 555	1 439	641	1 839	7 483	20 872	4 878	3 120	11 931	3 448	3 554
	June	14 060	3 298	2 364	639	1 537	7 470	24 521	4 495	3 063	12 165	2 698	2 670
	July	12 682	4 276	1 620	806	1 895	7 186	26 907	4 373	3 861	17 167	2 629	3 758
	August	10 659	5 756	1 721	871	1 693	7 967	22 448	3 667	3 181	21 921	2 034	2 971
	September	10 082	3 067	1 394	948	2 161	8 227	25 483	4 587	2 890	11 846	2 781	3 056
	October	12 376	3 973	1 349	542	2 478	7 429	20 819	4 981	3 420	11 304	1 589	3 200
	November	12 435	3 747	1 395	537	2 439	7 834	20 688	4 373	3 710	11 049	1 581	4 000
December	8 605	2 101	777	439	1 096	7 469	17 460	2 703	2 496	6 799	818	3 020	
1/ 2010	January	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 849	10 033	1 066	6 000
	May	13 037	3 004	2 074	618	2 179	8 162	20 002	4 536	3 295	20 265	1 001	6 500
	June	13 991	3 375	1 325	360	2 148	8 055	17 263	4 381	2 841	12 186	881	6 000
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 171	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200

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

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		August	July	August		August	July	August
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	8 602	6 009	6 096	73 332	7 367	5 217	5 326
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	1 285	1 284	1 128	11 200	1 104	980	908
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	8 401	7 846	7 286	80 893	7 300	7 140	6 463
1.2.2 Other	78 652	7 589	9 382	6 140	69 473	6 592	8 661	5 496
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 624	2 256	2 370	22 483	2 035	1 759	2 053
1.4 Money lent	273 794	26 174	23 275	19 026	267 864	25 664	22 617	18 561
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	5 694	7 620	5 010	51 777	4 738	7 019	4 469
1.6 Other debts	95 130	7 684	7 603	6 743	86 580	6 876	6 469	5 956
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	68 053	65 275	53 799	663 602	61 676	59 862	49 232
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		66 929	59 173	53 291		60 842	54 782	48 909

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		August	July	August		August	July	August
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	69 957	53 300	53 394	497 848	45 799	34 361	35 086
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	32 048	29 842	26 088	319 087	29 202	20 858	20 174
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	25 543	29 336	25 917	266 902	20 623	22 332	19 363
1.2.2 Other	715 777	78 557	58 526	56 979	556 872	60 834	47 444	46 926
1.3 Rent	459 493	39 847	43 709	35 027	312 500	23 998	25 462	22 321
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	237 132	226 625	149 832	2 411 391	230 035	212 859	137 910
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	76 958	87 171	62 177	627 760	58 651	70 739	53 823
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	95 514	100 978	98 826	975 583	71 843	70 786	69 493
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	655 556	629 487	508 240	5 967 943	540 985	504 841	405 096
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		638 000	547 664	496 624		536 212	448 010	404 259

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2009 and the three months ended August 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates June to August 2009	Actual estimates June to August 2010	% change between June to August 2009 and June to August 2010	Difference between June to August 2009 and June to August 2010
Number of summonses for debt	385 094	331 766	-13,8	-53 328
Number of judgements for debt	199 318	181 070	-9,2	-18 248
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 976,2	1 716,9	-13,1	-259,3

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the three months ended August 2009 and the three months ended August 2010 1/

Item	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
– Open account	-2,2	-3,4	-2,4
– Instalment sale transactions	-0,4	-0,1	-1,0
Services			
– Professional	-0,4	-1,2	0,3
– Other	-0,2	-0,5	-2,3
Rent	-0,1	0,1	-0,6
Money lent	-4,4	-6,1	-6,9
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-4,5	3,5	0,7
Other debts	-1,6	-1,5	-0,9
Total	-13,8	-9,2	-13,1

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during June to August 2009, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates August 2009	Actual estimates August 2010	% change between August 2009 and August 2010	Difference between August 2009 and August 2010
Number of summonses for debt	126 360	111 498	-11,8	-14 862
Number of judgements for debt	68 053	53 799	-20,9	-14 254
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	655,6	508,2	-22,5	-147,4

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.
Purpose of the survey	3	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.
Scope of the survey	4	This survey covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	5	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. 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 for debt. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for August 2010 was 90,1%. Improved response rate for July 2010 was 91,4%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> 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 as computer printouts or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures

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 debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. 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 transaction 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 salaries, 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 refer to medical doctors, dentists, advocates, attorneys, auditors, accountants, architects, engineers, hospital services etc.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written undertaking, signed by a person or party, 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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