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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

August 2022

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Key results for August 2022

Table A – Key figures for the month of August 2022

Actual estimates	August 2022	% change between August 2021 and August 2022	% change between June – August 2021 and June – August 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	40 772	4,8	13,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	11 787	-0,1	1,5
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	311,2	-7,4	0,9

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt increased by 13,4% in the three months ended August 2022 compared with the three months ended August 2021.

The largest positive contributors to the 13,4% increase in civil summonses issued were:

- 'other' debts (contributing 8,1 percentage points);
- services (contributing 5,1 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing 2,4 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 1,5% in the three months ended August 2022 compared with the three months ended August 2021.

The largest positive contributors to the 1,5% increase were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing 2,8 percentage points);
- services (contributing 0,7 of a percentage point); and
- promissory notes (contributing 0,6 of a percentage point).

Goods sold (contributing -1,4 percentage points) was the largest negative contributor – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 0,9% in the three months ended August 2022 compared with the three months ended August 2021.

The main positive contributors to the 0,9% increase were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing 3,5 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing 1,2 percentage points).

Goods sold (contributing -2,5 percentage points) and 'other' debts (contributing -1,2 percentage points) were the largest negative contributors – see Table 5.

There were 11 787 civil judgements recorded for debt in August 2022, amounting to R311,2 million. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R94,4 million or 30,3%);
- services (R65,2 million or 20,9%); and
- 'other' debts (R55,2 million or 17,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

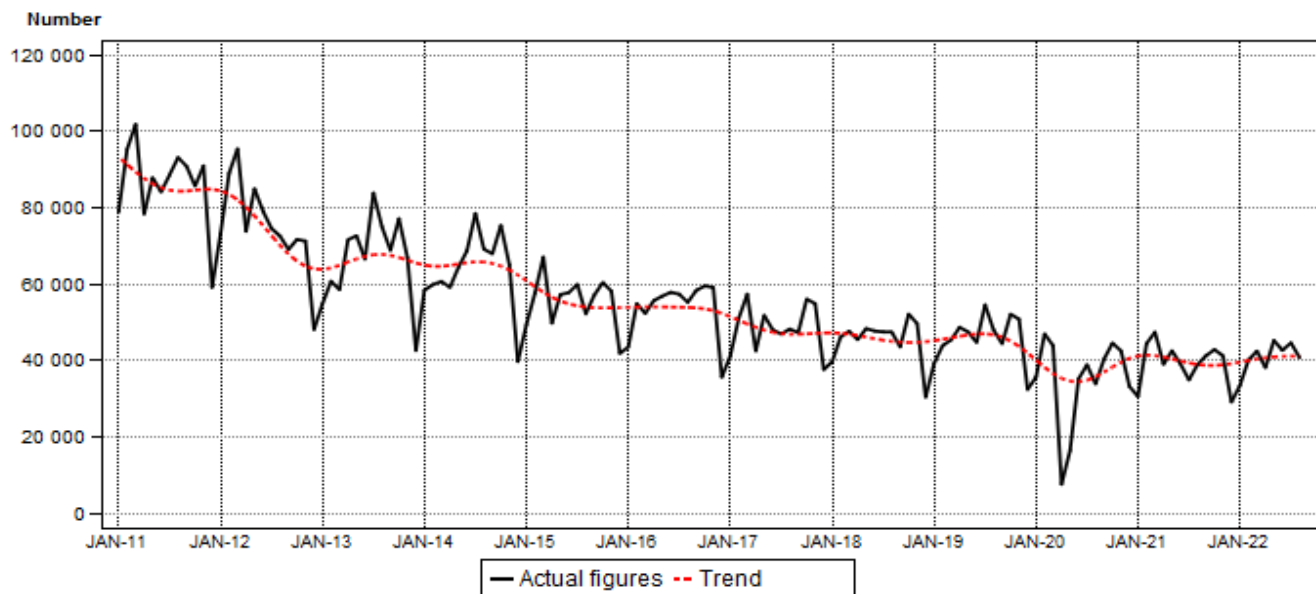
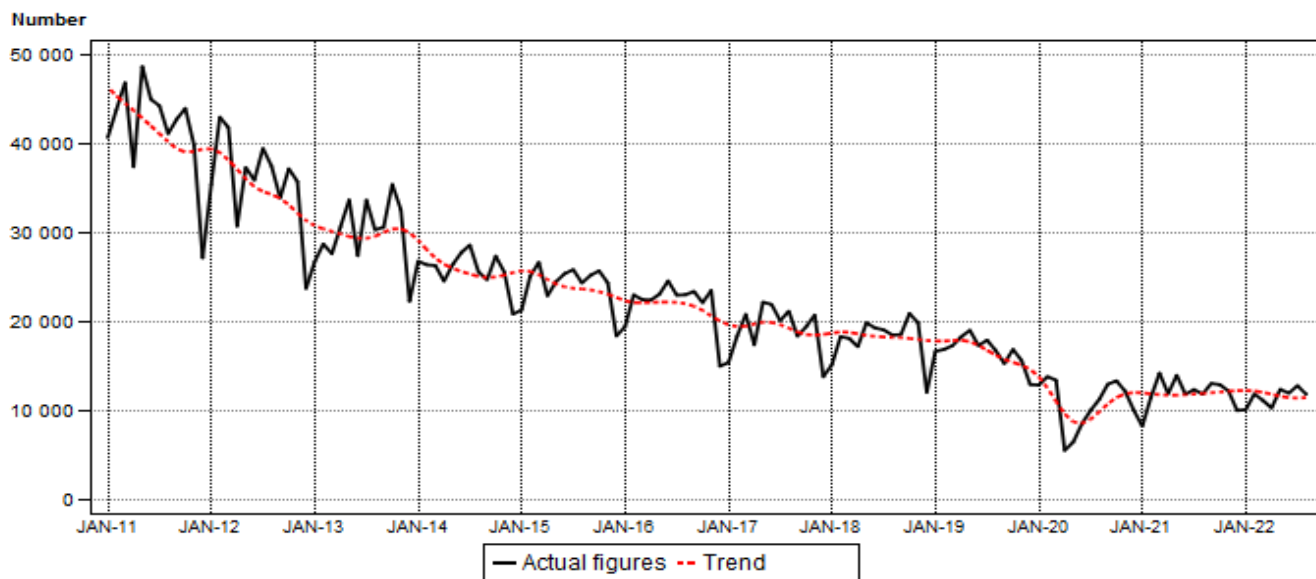


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables**Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons**

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2022	Aug-21	1/ Jul-22	1/ Aug-22	2022	Aug-21	1/ Jul-22	1/ Aug-22
Cases recorded	Actual figures	340 676	41 517	46 522	43 391	291 507	36 535	40 424	35 836
	Seasonally adjusted		41 587	47 829	39 759		36 678	40 675	32 558
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	16 957	1 947	1 827	1 669	10 812	1 243	1 110	1 022
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	10 103	1 301	1 175	985	8 128	1 051	921	742
	Services - Professional	37 839	3 921	5 238	4 732	30 883	3 328	4 328	3 856
	Services - Other	48 423	5 924	6 661	6 992	40 728	5 085	5 747	5 961
	Rent	17 099	2 073	2 189	1 904	12 193	1 622	1 645	1 330
	Money lent	80 419	9 742	10 533	9 802	75 298	9 110	9 799	9 177
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	31 775	4 642	3 687	2 847	29 141	4 422	3 369	2 568
	Other debts	84 750	9 343	13 295	11 841	76 025	8 412	12 297	10 746
	Total - Actual figures	327 365	38 893	44 605	40 772	283 208	34 273	39 216	35 402
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		39 186	44 973	37 822		34 601	39 483	32 981

1/ Preliminary.

Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2022	Aug-21	1/ Jul-22	1/ Aug-22	2022	Aug-21	1/ Jul-22	1/ Aug-22
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	5 160	716	656	574	3 444	464	437	328
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	4 166	474	602	366	3 303	406	547	307
	Services - Professional	14 588	1 988	2 168	2 174	12 413	1 816	1 896	1 907
	Services - Other	16 024	2 051	2 063	2 066	13 696	1 806	1 792	1 757
	Rent	7 471	998	846	887	5 598	807	619	693
	Money lent	22 288	2 608	3 190	2 862	19 662	2 337	2 902	2 626
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	7 624	1 069	1 007	982	6 694	993	897	924
	Other debts	14 596	1 897	2 210	1 876	12 620	1 638	2 004	1 586
	Total - Actual figures	91 917	11 801	12 742	11 787	77 430	10 267	11 094	10 128
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		11 878	14 448	10 871		10 501	12 782	9 390

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2022	Aug-21	1/ Jul-22	1/ Aug-22	2022	Aug-21	1/ Jul-22	1/ Aug-22
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	106 997	17 253	12 540	12 131	47 776	8 442	6 324	4 542
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	116 497	15 116	20 371	11 519	92 397	12 588	18 327	9 452
	Services - Professional	148 297	20 976	22 805	22 390	113 007	18 853	17 886	18 108
	Services - Other	299 378	45 064	31 980	42 798	250 345	37 920	26 051	36 859
	Rent	242 529	33 768	31 385	30 203	174 973	25 880	23 868	20 940
	Money lent	676 925	89 463	99 864	94 391	633 518	86 330	95 083	88 462
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	269 803	47 823	37 969	42 555	234 664	44 704	32 436	38 182
	Other debts	407 711	66 582	53 801	55 174	328 131	39 643	44 905	47 516
	Total - Actual figures	2 268 137	336 045	310 715	311 161	1 874 811	274 360	264 880	264 061
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		318 152	315 345	284 632		261 740	274 255	238 521

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2021 and the three months ended August 2022

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2021	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2022	% change between Jun – Aug 2021 and Jun – Aug 2022	Difference between Jun – Aug 2021 and Jun – Aug 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	112 862	128 028	13,4	15 166
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	35 880	36 430	1,5	550
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	901,3	908,9	0,9	7,6

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2021 and the three months ended August 2022 1/

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

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt by the percentage contribution to the total during June to August 2021, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates August 2021	Actual estimates August 2022	% change between August 2021 and August 2022	Difference between August 2021 and August 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	38 893	40 772	4,8	1 879
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	11 801	11 787	-0,1	-14
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	336,0	311,2	-7,4	-24,8

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2021	Aug	9 222	1 918	779	3 297	5 385	1 749	12 599	2 199	1 745	38 893
	Sep	8 362	3 041	515	3 309	5 313	2 086	14 337	2 486	1 778	41 227
	Oct	8 313	2 860	521	3 564	6 284	1 985	15 268	2 211	1 818	42 824
	Nov	8 764	3 032	457	3 955	5 186	1 540	13 875	2 671	1 740	41 220
	Dec	7 279	2 554	349	2 615	3 495	1 659	7 954	1 721	1 467	29 093
2022	Jan	6 524	2 508	460	2 604	4 803	1 539	11 160	2 178	1 684	33 460
	Feb	8 115	2 993	466	3 399	6 799	1 888	12 214	2 545	1 682	40 101
	Mar	8 213	3 083	517	2 919	7 633	2 342	13 658	2 301	1 766	42 432
	Apr	7 778	3 309	505	2 681	5 755	1 695	12 341	2 391	1 646	38 101
	May	8 361	3 659	472	3 308	8 286	2 126	13 324	3 621	2 086	45 243
	Jun	7 922	3 399	620	3 114	7 355	2 077	13 279	3 093	1 792	42 651
	Jul	7 727	3 343	421	2 662	9 140	1 955	14 969	2 647	1 741	44 605
	Aug	7 016	3 319	325	2 782	8 122	2 259	12 815	2 507	1 627	40 772

1/ Latest three months are preliminary.

Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2021	Aug	2 066	659	266	1 931	1 620	682	2 640	694	1 243	11 801
	Sep	2 617	937	267	2 064	1 825	716	2 660	620	1 278	12 984
	Oct	2 673	1 020	254	2 256	1 712	648	2 536	517	1 243	12 859
	Nov	2 892	1 425	175	2 125	1 119	483	2 001	617	1 302	12 139
	Dec	2 158	1 013	99	1 483	1 249	553	1 613	663	1 122	9 953
2022	Jan	1 676	1 288	129	1 726	1 687	340	1 550	557	1 085	10 038
	Feb	2 868	1 257	175	1 851	1 348	597	1 814	678	1 221	11 809
	Mar	2 005	766	246	2 036	1 302	637	1 965	916	1 205	11 078
	Apr	2 126	760	100	2 157	1 179	352	1 774	672	1 115	10 235
	May	2 632	1 033	186	2 271	1 400	600	1 840	1 008	1 357	12 327
	Jun	2 583	1 273	284	2 077	1 287	620	1 992	564	1 221	11 901
	Jul	3 034	1 046	145	1 948	1 256	695	2 560	782	1 276	12 742
	Aug	2 573	1 076	129	1 379	1 446	771	2 244	898	1 271	11 787

1/ Latest three months are preliminary.

Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2021	Aug	68 741	14 303	4 178	27 880	43 039	12 579	97 814	54 980	12 531	336 045
	Sep	75 269	23 317	4 371	28 592	66 193	13 703	115 558	13 361	16 500	356 864
	Oct	88 759	21 153	3 878	27 577	54 364	13 249	87 711	21 486	11 833	330 010
	Nov	94 672	25 820	5 568	27 259	42 919	7 696	80 047	16 686	11 791	312 458
	Dec	79 821	22 018	1 755	21 170	46 803	11 989	63 471	14 607	8 063	269 697
2022	Jan	48 137	20 494	3 439	28 982	45 395	5 377	70 829	11 212	5 947	239 812
	Feb	86 699	26 031	3 286	26 090	65 365	8 740	65 794	14 494	10 383	306 882
	Mar	51 204	16 296	3 691	26 573	49 998	9 640	69 635	19 668	10 786	257 491
	Apr	59 314	15 686	1 636	27 155	46 933	5 011	66 041	11 872	5 996	239 644
	May	98 217	21 145	2 973	29 239	50 136	8 996	71 388	20 450	12 834	315 378
	Jun	72 828	27 652	3 195	27 052	50 610	9 920	73 827	12 184	9 786	287 054
	Jul	97 064	15 767	2 429	27 202	41 498	9 574	91 632	13 852	11 697	310 715
	Aug	80 618	25 503	2 275	25 576	48 822	16 780	83 850	16 494	11 243	311 161

1/ Latest three months are preliminary.

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. 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 are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by email, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for August 2022 was 79,8%. The improved collection rate for July 2022 was 82,3%.
Seasonal adjustment	8	Seasonally adjusted estimates of all categories are generated each month, using the X-12 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the United States Census Bureau. Seasonal adjustment 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. Therefore, the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. The X-12-ARIMA procedure for civil cases for debt is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: Click to download seasonal adjustment for civil cases for debt February 2022.
Trend cycle	9	The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-12-ARIMA Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimate the underlying trend cycle.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * 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.
Cases recorded	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
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.
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 debt such as salaries and wages, medical fund debt, sponsored debt, class and tuition debt, tax, assessment rates and property 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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