



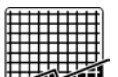
Statistics of civil cases for debt

January 2004

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Key figures for the month ended January 2004

	January 2004	% change between January 2003 and January 2004	% change between November 2002 to January 2003 and November 2003 to January 2004
Actual estimates			
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	112 490	-3,6	-7,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	71 260	-2,4	-6,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	530,1	+17,1	+11,8

	January 2004	% change between December 2003 and January 2004	% change between August 2003 to October 2003 and November 2003 to January 2004
Seasonally adjusted estimates			
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	125 147	-13,3	-4,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	87 493	+10,1	-9,4
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	650,4	+18,8	-16,1

Key findings as at the end of January 2004

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended January 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 4,0% compared with the previous three months. Furthermore, the total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended January 2004 decreased by 7,6% compared with the three months ended January 2003.

The major contributor to the decrease of 7,6% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended January 2004 compared with the three months ended January 2003 was civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (-7,9 percentage points). However, this decrease was partially counteracted by an increase in summonses issued relating to other services (+2,6 percentage points).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 9,4% compared with the previous three months. Furthermore, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2004 decreased by 6,2% compared with the three months ended January 2003.

The major contributor to the decrease of 6,2% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2004 compared with the three months ended January 2003 was civil judgements in respect of money lent (-6,5 percentage points). However, this decrease was partially counteracted by an increase in judgements recorded relating to rent (+2,2 percentage points).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 16,1% compared with the previous three months. However, the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2004 increased by 11,8% compared with the three months ended January 2003.

The major contributors to the increase of 11,8% in the value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2004 compared with the three months ended January 2003 were civil judgements recorded in respect of promissory notes (+4,9 percentage points), 'other' debts (+4,4 percentage points) and 'other' services (+3,7 percentage points).

During January 2004, 71 260 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R530,1 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R530,1 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R166,2 million or 31,3%) and 'other' debts (R134,3 million or 25,3%).

Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt

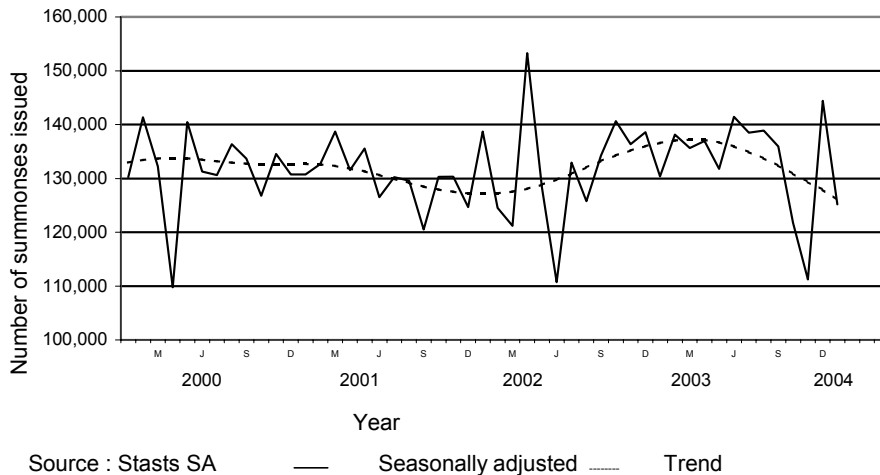
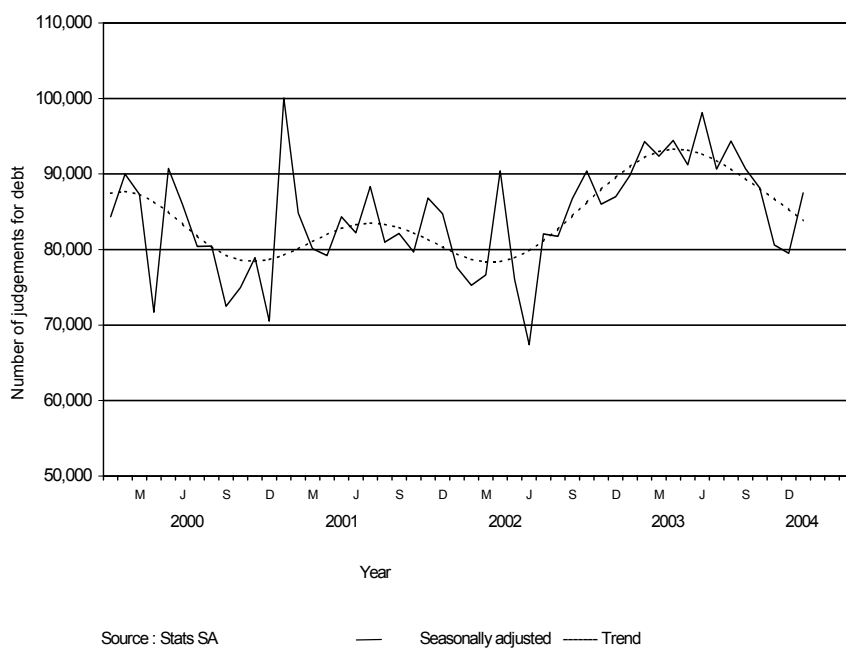


Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Notes

Forthcoming issues	Issue	Expected release date
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	February 2004	22 April 2004
	March 2004	27 May 2004
	April 2004	24 June 2004
	May 2004	22 July 2004
	June 2004	26 August 2004
	July 2004	23 September 2004
	August 2004	21 October 2004
	September 2004	25 November 2004
	October 2004	15 December 2004
	November 2004	20 January 2005
	December 2004	24 February 2005

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 January 2004 was 78,3%.

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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			
	2003	2003	2003	2004	2003	2003	2003	2004
		Jan.	Dec.	Jan.		Jan.	Dec.	Jan.
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 801 274	131 285	119 331	128 293	1 671 791	121 332	110 199	118 912
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		149 145	153 065	145 610		137 674	140 732	134 946
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	209 016	17 045	12 539	14 176	186 204	14 936	11 107	12 379
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	52 568	3 274	4 004	3 537	48 169	2 916	3 753	3 273
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	165 715	14 011	11 051	12 987	157 675	13 434	10 654	12 328
2.2.2 Other	272 603	18 906	20 689	21 933	252 824	17 078	19 930	21 082
2.3 Rent	79 342	5 460	6 042	6 081	65 329	4 551	4 914	5 152
2.4 Money lent	417 605	33 105	22 805	25 912	405 557	31 912	22 029	24 881
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	132 743	9 408	9 717	10 680	123 156	8 842	8 991	10 010
2.6 Other	270 276	15 497	18 204	17 184	247 876	13 920	16 071	15 501
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 599 868	116 706	105 051	112 490	1 486 791	107 590	97 449	104 606
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		130 379	144 427	125 147		119 824	133 779	116 237

Table 2 - Number of civil cases recorded in 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

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			
	2003	2003	2003	2004	2003	2003	2003	2004
		Jan.	Dec.	Jan.		Jan.	Dec.	Jan.
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	141 959	8 784	8 494	7 753	130 779	8 025	7 333	7 108
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	33 293	1 637	1 273	1 378	31 280	1 495	1 142	1 259
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	84 324	7 109	5 382	7 046	93 648	6 818	5 164	6 796
1.2.2 Other	139 914	8 903	8 480	9 308	131 607	8 249	8 056	8 874
1.3 Rent	52 190	2 705	4 520	4 600	49 615	2 334	3 773	3 882
1.4 Money lent	389 269	26 825	21 942	23 314	363 367	26 149	21 160	23 007
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	99 998	5 930	5 607	8 571	96 461	5 742	5 361	8 220
1.6 Other	144 846	11 132	8 571	9 290	133 024	10 536	7 909	8 459
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	1 085 793	73 025	64 269	71 260	1 029 783	69 348	59 898	67 604
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		89 825	79 488	87 493		85 356	74 425	82 940

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

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2003	2003	2003	2004	2003	2003	2003	2004
		Jan.	Dec.	Jan.		Jan.	Dec.	Jan.
	R 1000							
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	761 616	43 185	42 444	43 782	637 224	33 786	31 542	32 663
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	282 935	18 823	20 511	19 836	231 641	15 761	16 731	16 941
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	213 641	15 164	14 855	16 681	197 073	13 251	13 445	15 449
1.2.2 Other	634 169	34 912	57 067	57 981	571 847	30 870	52 105	52 846
1.3 Rent	300 680	17 778	22 664	23 177	250 426	13 374	17 477	17 262
1.4 Money lent	3 050 038	176 064	189 741	166 163	2 858 101	162 133	177 272	160 331
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	917 163	43 367	62 676	68 195	853 522	38 113	56 873	59 246
1.6 Other	1 569 427	103 396	89 097	134 291	1 256 410	73 417	68 378	84 017
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 729 669	452 689	499 054	530 106	6 856 245	380 706	433 823	438 754
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		549 424	547 334	650 385		475 871	505 463	555 529

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, ejection 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 (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.

General information

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