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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

March 2022

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Key results for March 2022

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2022

Actual estimates	March 2022	% change between March 2021 and March 2022	% change between January – March 2021 and January – March 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	41 921	-11,6	-5,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	11 126	-21,4	-2,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	257,2	-25,2	0,5

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 5,6% in the first quarter of 2022 compared with the first quarter of 2021.

The main contributors to the 5,6% decrease in civil summonses issued were:

- promissory notes (contributing -3,3 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -1,8 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -1,2 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 2,3% in the first quarter of 2022 compared with the first quarter of 2021.

The largest contributors to the 2,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -3,2 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -1,0 percentage point).

Money lent (contributing 1,5 percentage points) was the largest positive contributor – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 0,5% in the first quarter of 2022 compared with the first quarter of 2021.

The largest contributors to the 0,5% increase were civil judgements relating to:

- 'other' debts (contributing 2,7 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing 2,2 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing 1,0 percentage point).

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

In March 2022, 11 126 civil judgements for debt amounting to R257,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- 'other' debts (R62,2 million or 24,2%);
- money lent (R61,2 million or 23,8%); and
- services (R60,8 million or 23,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

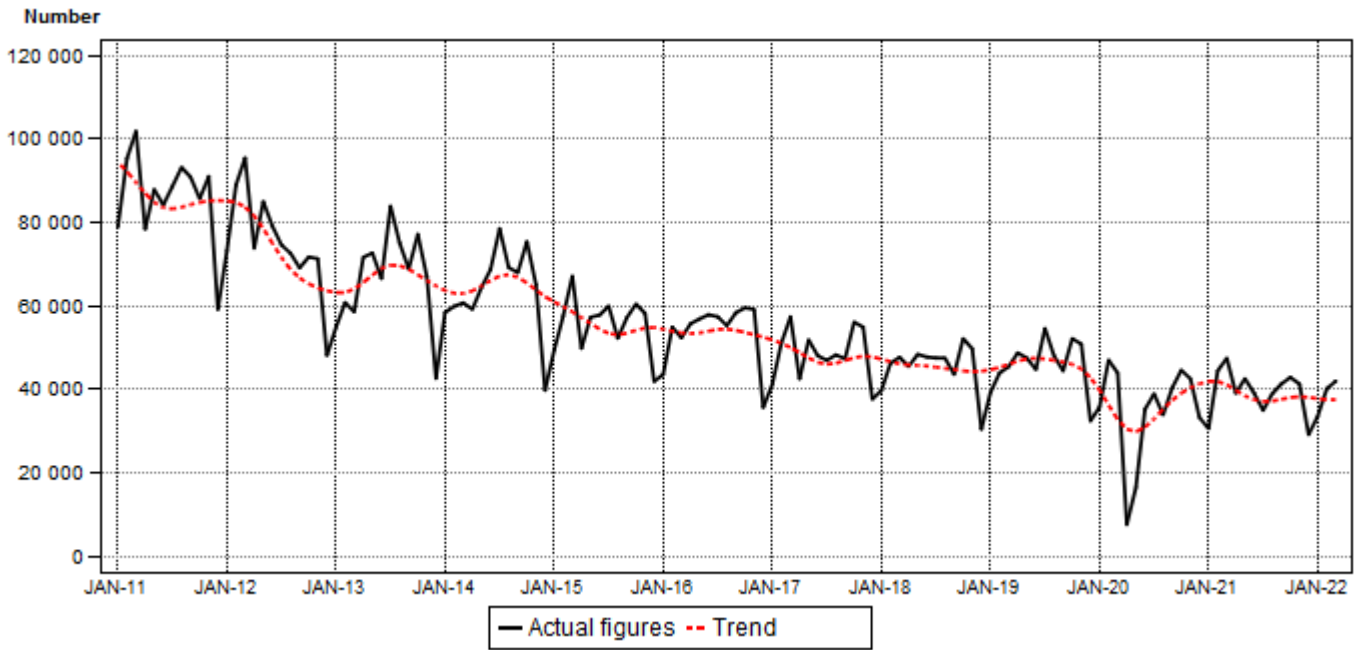
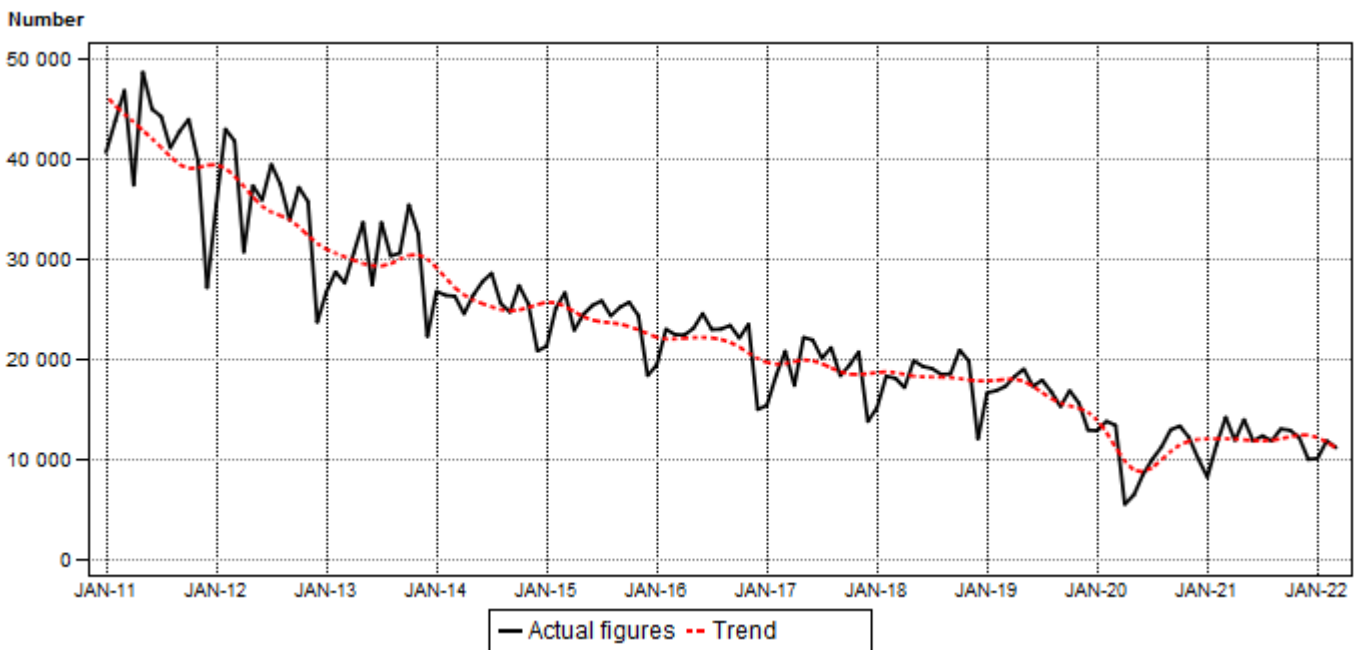


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2021	Mar-21	1/ Feb-22	1/ Mar-22	2021	Mar-21	1/ Feb-22	1/ Mar-22
Cases recorded	Actual figures	494 845	49 158	40 720	44 171	436 556	43 594	35 021	38 284
	Seasonally adjusted		42 305	38 737	38 266		37 709	33 341	33 013
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	22 874	2 119	2 317	2 017	15 198	1 281	1 529	1 366
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	15 644	1 607	1 274	1 115	13 175	1 494	1 029	826
	Services - Professional	48 261	4 430	4 698	4 391	41 729	3 768	3 972	3 643
	Services - Other	71 257	6 112	5 856	5 877	60 342	5 277	4 820	4 895
	Rent	27 753	3 055	1 967	2 249	21 361	2 161	1 372	1 625
	Money lent	116 700	10 897	9 712	11 031	108 854	10 409	9 000	10 469
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 140	6 259	4 506	4 687	56 487	6 078	4 196	4 417
	Other debts	109 473	12 925	9 771	10 554	99 171	11 777	8 754	9 456
	Total - Actual figures	471 102	47 404	40 101	41 921	416 317	42 245	34 672	36 697
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		40 905	37 889	35 303		36 403	32 515	30 760

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2021	Mar-21	1/ Feb-22	1/ Mar-22	2021	Mar-21	1/ Feb-22	1/ Mar-22
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	9 723	1 056	704	643	6 559	500	487	440
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	5 635	517	546	526	4 762	449	436	452
	Services - Professional	23 496	2 293	1 579	1 919	20 923	2 079	1 328	1 602
	Services - Other	26 540	2 531	2 237	1 747	23 612	2 215	1 940	1 428
	Rent	12 335	1 414	952	1 091	9 900	1 044	739	836
	Money lent	31 574	2 924	3 005	2 385	28 531	2 720	2 673	2 085
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	10 081	1 029	875	717	9 211	936	789	662
	Other debts	23 940	2 392	1 911	2 098	21 607	2 178	1 733	1 878
	Total - Actual figures	143 324	14 156	11 809	11 126	125 105	12 121	10 125	9 383
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		12 158	12 109	8 981		10 176	10 549	7 466

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2021	Mar-21	1/ Feb-22	1/ Mar-22	2021	Mar-21	1/ Feb-22	1/ Mar-22
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	220 750	19 835	14 286	13 714	103 048	7 607	6 856	6 189
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	204 306	14 929	12 240	10 858	171 819	12 454	9 267	8 412
	Services - Professional	224 848	18 258	16 926	19 103	176 770	15 236	12 638	13 458
	Services - Other	483 619	46 216	42 775	41 736	400 129	37 593	35 595	36 213
	Rent	398 259	49 706	27 579	24 161	295 650	33 787	20 835	17 405
	Money lent	983 153	92 851	96 129	61 179	918 510	88 387	89 742	56 257
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	383 004	34 823	36 274	24 296	340 792	31 168	32 206	20 254
	Other debts	669 111	67 219	60 673	62 195	554 372	57 850	47 255	49 591
	Total - Actual figures	3 567 050	343 837	306 882	257 242	2 961 090	284 082	254 394	207 779
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		328 550	312 116	220 519		269 278	266 091	170 390

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the first quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jan – Mar 2021	Actual estimates Jan – Mar 2022	% change between Jan – Mar 2021 and Jan – Mar 2022	Difference between Jan – Mar 2021 and Jan – Mar 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	122 338	115 482	-5,6	-6 856
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	33 757	32 973	-2,3	-784
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	800,0	803,9	0,5	3,9

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 first quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 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	0,4	-0,7	-1,1
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,4	0,4	-0,3
Services - Professional	0,6	-2,1	-0,4
Services - Other	-0,9	-1,1	0,7
Rent	-1,2	-1,0	-4,4
Money lent	0,9	1,5	2,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-3,3	0,4	1,0
Other debts	-1,8	0,2	2,7
Total	-5,6	-2,3	0,5

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 January to March 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 March 2021	Actual estimates March 2022	% change between March 2021 and March 2022	Difference between March 2021 and March 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	47 404	41 921	-11,6	-5 483
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	14 156	11 126	-21,4	-3 030
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	343,8	257,2	-25,2	-86,6

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	Mar	9 973	2 706	625	2 961	7 731	2 148	16 375	3 210	1 675	47 404
	Apr	8 293	2 817	513	2 633	5 257	1 990	13 482	2 296	1 732	39 013
	May	9 072	3 024	652	3 535	7 507	1 450	12 958	2 682	1 645	42 525
	Jun	8 917	2 973	558	3 027	5 963	2 033	12 140	1 688	1 763	39 062
	Jul	7 021	2 710	725	2 667	4 851	1 756	11 580	1 938	1 659	34 907
	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	7 726	3 080	510	2 919	7 619	2 342	13 658	2 301	1 766	41 921

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	Mar	2 670	1 049	242	1 473	1 947	887	3 220	1 533	1 135	14 156
	Apr	2 141	989	200	1 541	1 916	642	2 196	1 045	1 166	11 836
	May	3 816	1 237	159	1 792	1 824	665	2 438	819	1 166	13 916
	Jun	2 422	1 673	164	2 105	1 651	349	1 654	594	1 159	11 771
	Jul	2 143	1 032	257	2 250	1 957	541	1 995	889	1 244	12 308
	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	2 061	766	243	2 036	1 297	637	1 965	916	1 205	11 126

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	Mar	69 027	21 207	5 942	20 962	48 240	16 546	130 397	23 862	7 654	343 837
	Apr	59 052	18 834	4 451	25 062	47 587	15 367	99 525	27 828	9 771	307 477
	May	62 817	23 081	2 732	26 618	43 891	16 807	84 463	20 609	8 270	289 288
	Jun	64 074	31 007	3 379	31 247	47 121	8 090	71 969	18 327	13 399	288 613
	Jul	61 900	20 111	4 549	26 797	52 527	10 779	65 016	21 488	13 432	276 599
	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	51 263	16 296	3 333	26 573	50 048	9 640	69 635	19 668	10 786	257 242

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 March 2022 was 76,4%. The improved collection rate for February 2022 was 80,3%.
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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