

Statistics of civil cases for debt May 2004

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Key figures for the month ended May 2004

	May 2004	% change between May 2003 and May 2004	% change between March 2003 to May 2003 and March 2004 to May 2004	% change between January 2003 to May 2003 and January 2004 to May 2004
Actual estimates				
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	122 278	-15,4	-12,5	-10,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	81 153	-17,2	-11,8	-10,9
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	526,5	-6,6	-2,2	-0,8

	May 2004	% change between April 2004 and May 2004	% change between December 2003 to February 2004 and March 2004 to May 2004
Seasonally adjusted estimates			
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	113 709	+2,6	-9,7
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	77 672	-6,3	-1,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	552,8	-24,7	+5,8

Key findings as at the end of May 2004

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 9,7% compared with the previous three months. Furthermore, the total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2004 decreased by 12,5% compared with the three months ended May 2003. The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the first five months of 2004 decreased by 10,4% compared with the first five months of 2003.

The major contributors to the decrease of 12,5% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2004 compared with the three months ended May 2003 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (-6,5 percentage points), 'other' debts (-3,5 percentage points) and goods sold on open account (-2,5 percentage points).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2004, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 1,1% compared with the previous three months. Furthermore, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2004 decreased by 11,8% compared with the three months ended May 2003. Furthermore, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first five months of 2004 decreased by 10,9% compared with the first five months of 2003.

The major contributors to the decrease of 11,8% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2004 compared with the three months ended May 2003 were civil judgements in respect of money lent (-7,2 percentage points), 'other' debts (-2,8 percentage points) and goods sold on open account (-2,7 percentage points).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

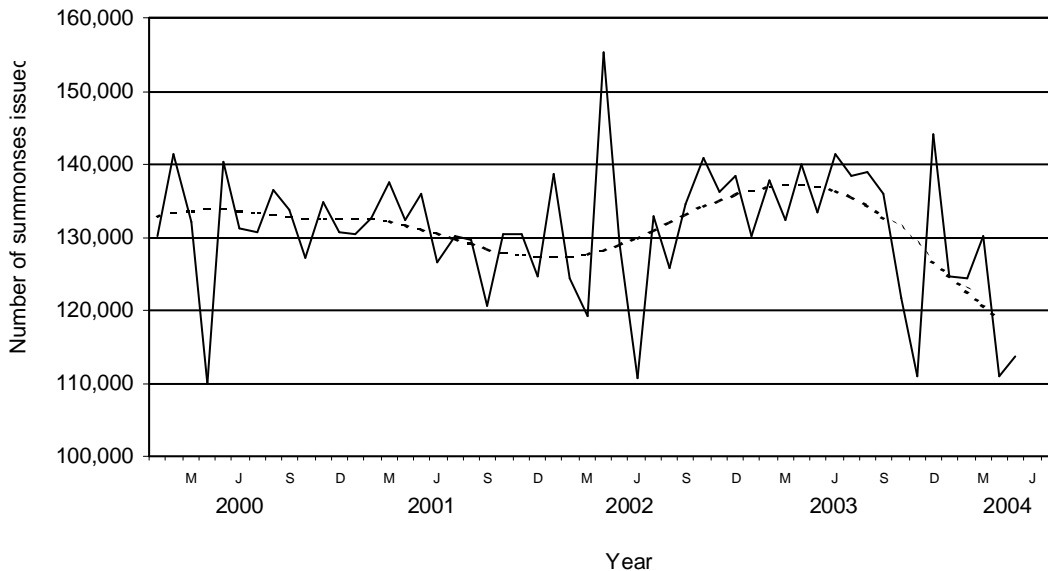
The value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2004, after seasonal adjustment, increased by 5,8% compared with the previous three months. However, the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2004 decreased by 2,2% compared with the three months ended May 2003. Furthermore, the value of civil judgements recorded for debt the first five months of 2004 decreased by 0,8% compared with the first five months of 2003.

The major contributor to the decrease of 2,2% in the value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2004 compared with the three months ended May 2003 was civil judgements recorded in respect of money lent (-2,2 percentage points).

During May 2004, 81 153 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R526,5 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R526,5 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R184,6 million or 35,1%), 'other' debts (R89,9 million or 17,1%) and promissory notes (R82,2 million or 15,6%) (see table 4 column 5).

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

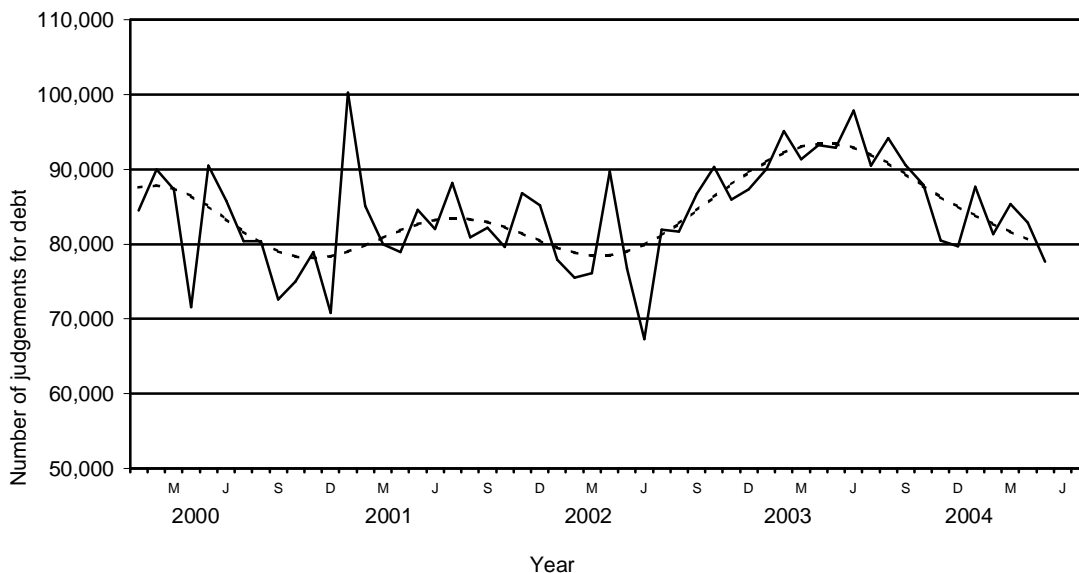
Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt



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
	June 2004	19 August 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 May 2004 was 80,4%.	

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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 May	2004 Apr.	2004 May	2003	2003 May	2004 Apr.	2004 May
1 Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 801 274	157 827	114 396	137 955	1 671 791	144 981	105 157	126 055
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		147 124	124 992	129 722		135 466	115 984	118 547
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	209 016	16 831	12 602	13 635	186 204	14 675	11 154	11 818
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	52 568	3 106	3 349	4 632	48 169	2 621	3 048	4 276
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	165 715	13 844	12 306	14 999	157 675	13 050	11 736	14 080
2.2.2 Other	272 603	23 475	18 589	24 826	252 824	21 135	17 447	23 340
2.3 Rent	79 342	6 981	4 833	5 381	65 329	5 731	3 751	3 928
2.4 Money lent	417 605	38 691	25 417	28 989	405 557	37 691	23 958	27 165
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	132 743	13 755	10 465	11 200	123 156	12 999	9 742	10 379
2.6 Other								
	270 276	27 898	14 049	18 616	247 876	24 967	12 664	16 660
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 599 868	144 581	101 610	122 278	1 486 791	132 869	93 500	111 646
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		133 544	110 840	113 709		123 069	102 450	104 005

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

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 May	2004 Apr.	2004 May	2003	2003 May	2004 Apr.	2004 May
1 Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	141 959	13 621	10 109	9 384	130 779	12 474	9 508	8 555
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	33 293	2 328	1 190	1 491	31 280	2 094	1 032	1 382
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	84 324	7 572	6 917	7 944	80 648	7 162	6 651	7 655
1.2.2 Other	139 914	12 790	10 266	12 237	131 607	11 846	9 591	11 622
1.3 Rent	52 190	5 578	2 767	3 642	49 615	4 457	1 934	2 687
1.4 Money lent	389 269	35 592	26 091	28 608	363 367	35 059	25 706	28 192
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	99 998	9 281	8 886	10 142	96 461	8 984	8 145	9 832
1.6 Other	144 846	11 238	8 199	7 705	133 024	10 565	7 560	6 895
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	1 085 793	98 000	74 425	81 153	1 029 781	92 641	70 127	76 820
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		92 918	82 854	77 672		87 539	78 685	73 304

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 May	2004 Apr.	2004 May	2003	2003 May	2004 Apr.	2004 May
	R' 000							
1 Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	761 616	54 788	69 817	45 027	637 224	41 616	59 459	33 121
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	282 935	21 561	19 016	22 579	231 641	16 417	15 552	19 279
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	213 641	15 747	21 619	19 074	197 073	14 076	19 945	17 132
1.2.2 Other	634 169	49 700	53 252	56 743	571 847	47 750	45 928	49 560
1.3 Rent	300 680	33 706	26 685	26 258	250 426	26 718	19 488	17 590
1.4 Money lent	3 050 038	240 529	256 028	184 647	2 858 101	211 069	247 666	178 864
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	917 163	47 431	71 079	82 240	853 522	44 804	64 156	77 281
1.6 Other	1 569 427	99 982	134 193	89 927	1 256 410	82 179	103 844	71 733
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 729 669	563 444	651 689	526 495	6 856 245	498 629	576 038	464 560
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		582 496	734 316	552 812		503 312	676 671	475 371

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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