



Statistics of civil cases for debt

October 2003

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Key figures for the month ended October 2003

Actual estimates	October 2003	% change between October 2002 and October 2003	% change between August 2002 to October 2002 and August 2003 to October 2003	% change between January 2002 to October 2002 and January 2003 to October 2003
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	125 327	-13,3	-1,1	+3,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	91 527	-3,8	+5,2	+15,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	784,0	+31,6	+19,8	+0,1

Seasonally adjusted estimates	October 2003	% change between September 2003 and October 2003	% change between May 2003 to July 2003 and August 2003 to October 2003
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	121 920	-11,1	-3,3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	88 512	-3,6	-1,7
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	724,5	+5,7	+7,5

Key findings as at the end of October 2003

The number of civil summonses for debt decreases

The number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended October 2003, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 3,3% compared with the previous three months of the same year. Furthermore, the total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended October 2003 decreased by 1,1% compared with the three months ended October 2002. However, the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the first ten months of 2003 increased by 3,5% compared with the first ten months of 2002.

The major contributors to the decrease of 1,1% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended October 2003 compared with the three months ended October 2002 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (-3,1 percentage points); goods sold (-2,1 percentage points) and rent (-1,0 percentage points).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt for three months ended October 2003, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 1,7% compared with the previous three months of the same year. However, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2003 increased by 5,2% compared with the three months ended October 2002. Furthermore, the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first ten months of 2003 increased by 15,1% compared with the first ten months of 2002.

The major contributors to the increase of 5,2% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2003 compared with the three months ended October 2002 were civil judgements recorded in respect of 'other' debts (+5,2 percentage points) and rent (+1,8 percentage points).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2003, after seasonal adjustment, increased by 7,5% compared with the previous three months of the same year. Furthermore, the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2003 increased by 19,8% compared with the three months ended October 2002. However, the value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first ten months of 2003 increased by 0,1% compared with the first ten months of 2002.

The major contributors to the increase of 19,8% in the value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2003 compared with the three months ended October 2002 were civil judgements recorded in respect of promissory notes (+9,0 percentage points); goods sold (+5,3 percentage points) and money lent (+3,6 percentage points). However, this increase was partially counteracted by a decrease in judgements recorded relating to instalment sale transactions (-2,2 percentage points).

During October 2003, 91 527 civil judgements for debt amounted to R784,0 million. The largest contributor to the R784,0 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (35,2% or R275,6 million).

Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt

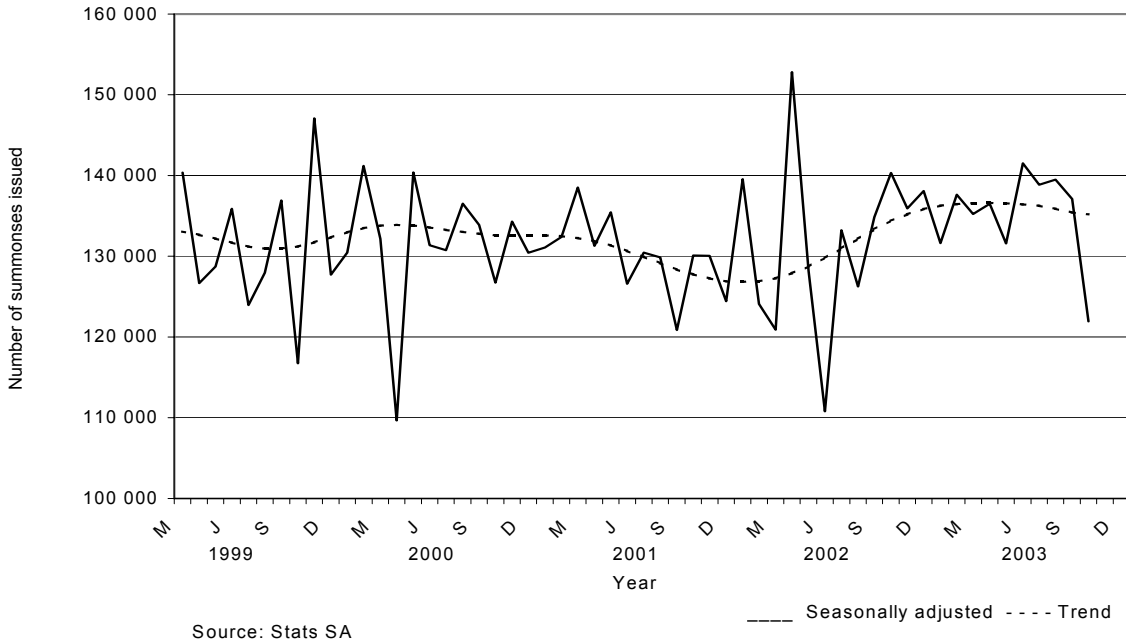
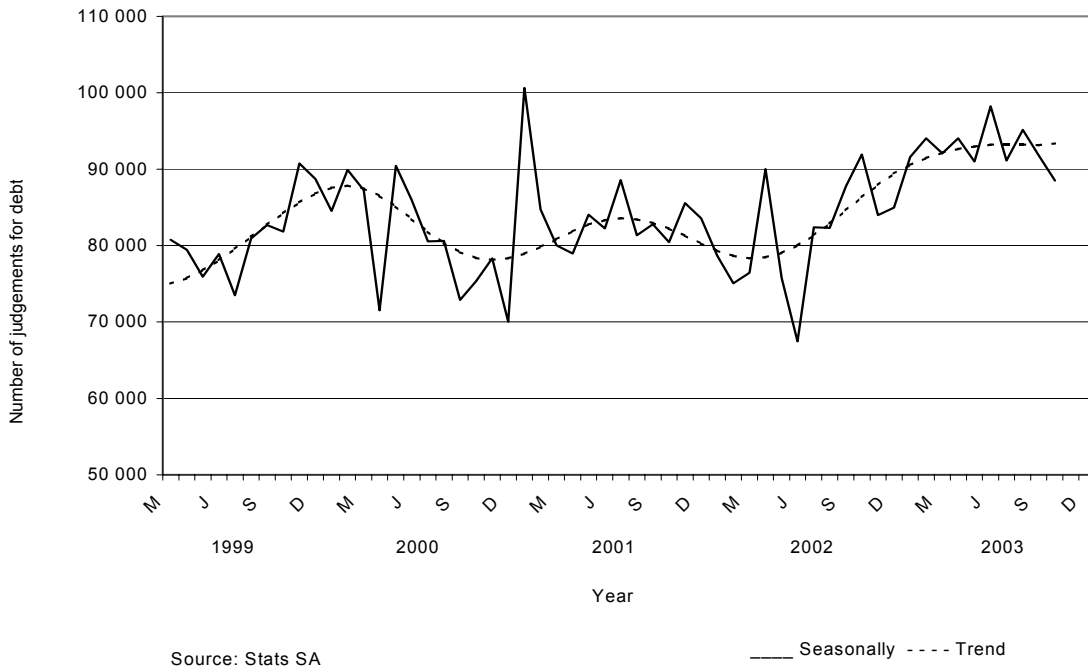


Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Notes**Forthcoming issues****Issue****Expected release date**

November 2003

22 January 2004

December 2003

19 February 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 October 2003 is 80,2%.

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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			
	2002	2002	2003	2003	2002	2002	2003	2003
		Oct.	Sept.	Oct.		Oct.	Sept.	Oct.
Number								
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 768 056	166 061	147 362	150 746	1 621 463	151 954	138 760	140 327
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		160 717	157 514	145 373		147 701	148 506	135 964
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Total								
2.1.1 Actual figures	1 578 890	144 551	127 882	125 328	1 451 846	132 290	120 872	117 690
2.1.2 Seasonally adjusted		140 339	137 111	121 920		129 758	129 590	115 555
2.2 Goods sold								
2.2.1 Open account	223 915	21 945	16 585	16 796	199 118	19 000	15 228	15 347
2.2.2 Instalment sale transactions	49 296	4 483	5 774	5 452	44 571	3 885	5 437	5 110
2.3 Services								
2.3.1 Professional	160 952	14 676	14 420	14 541	153 189	13 860	13 761	13 903
2.3.2 Other	279 149	24 695	22 438	21 610	261 533	23 248	21 200	20 272
2.4 Rent	82 475	9 135	5 943	7 463	67 581	7 849	5 014	6 262
2.5 Money lent	424 569	38 618	31 065	28 490	408 513	36 864	30 604	27 796
2.6 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	120 049	11 989	11 389	10 318	108 623	10 875	10 586	9 622
2.7 Other	238 485	19 011	20 270	20 657	208 719	16 709	19 041	19 379

Table 2 - Number of civil cases recorded in selected magistratessoffices

Year or month	Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East-London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2001	200 575	126 257	30 998	19 520	42 098	109 605	116 694	85 965	43 278	186 626	38 956	48 186
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
2002 - J	12 399	9 395	1 684	1 657	2 947	6 618	10 413	5 931	3 111	13 571	1 503	2 627
F	12 156	10 065	1 899	769	3 301	13 463	10 413	6 028	3 003	12 691	1 858	2 939
M	15 356	9 855	2 118	3 325	3 393	9 628	11 519	5 847	3 371	12 756	1 751	3 640
A	20 988	9 796	3 344	3 325	3 624	13 563	16 691	5 208	3 013	14 853	3 492	3 726
M	20 483	9 796	2 664	943	4 174	12 811	14 247	5 682	3 144	13 848	3 142	3 751
J	14 132	6 109	2 386	943	3 340	10 140	10 951	6 295	3 116	12 321	2 187	3 947
J	17 194	8 335	2 747	990	4 818	9 948	13 946	6 850	4 010	12 357	4 442	4 297
A	14 614	7 400	2 926	990	2 900	10 487	11 742	6 044	3 351	14 219	2 552	4 266
S	17 873	6 999	3 184	990	2 724	10 283	13 822	5 584	3 480	11 698	1 984	4 417
O	19 587	10 551	3 184	990	3 579	13 578	13 822	6 869	4 539	18 602	2 241	2 810
N	22 178	5 970	3 466	990	2 501	16 979	13 822	7 732	4 881	15 955	2 880	3 005
D	13 846	4 090	2 557	4 755	2 341	8 497	8 967	6 293	3 818	10 107	1 516	3 163
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	15 460	6 477	2 918	2 017	1 841	10 367	16 802	5 611	4 448	11 275	1 854	3 035
O	15 451	5 764	2 918	2 017	2 401	11 321	16 231	6 024	4 288	9 855	3 293	5 282

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			
	2002	2002	2003	2003	2002	2002	2003	2003
		Oct.	Sept.	Oct.		Oct.	Sept.	Oct.
Number								
1. Judgements								
1.1 Total								
1.1.1 Actual figures	974 811	95 138	91 045	91 525	921 266	90 059	86 994	86 264
1.1.2 Seasonally adjusted		91 915	91 833	88 511		87 268	87 630	83 759
1.2 Goods sold								
1.2.1 Open account	126 610	12 580	11 820	11 601	117 230	11 737	11 037	10 319
1.2.2 Instalment sale transactions	19 195	2 004	2 488	3 161	17 499	1 809	2 311	2 915
1.3 Services								
1.3.1 Professional	87 469	7 940	6 858	7 829	84 702	7 668	6 455	7 372
1.3.2 Other	141 994	12 657	12 041	13 993	134 442	11 729	11 554	13 229
1.4 Rent	40 913	3 841	5 284	5 797	33 338	3 028	4 745	4 869
1.5 Money lent	353 517	34 980	27 503	28 335	342 083	34 095	27 265	28 032
1.6 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	89 663	10 249	6 473	9 849	84 314	9 826	6 150	9 423
1.7 Other	115 450	10 887	18 580	10 962	107 655	10 167	17 477	10 105

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			
	2002	2002	2003	2003	2002	2002	2003	2003
		Oct.	Sept.	Oct.		Oct.	Sept.	Oct.
	R1 000							
1. Judgements								
1.1 Total	7 469 873	595 723	633 804	784 039	6 301 946	501 738	555 681	663 342
Seasonally adjusted						482 082	597 666	633 538
1.2 Goods sold								
1.2.1 Open account	700 324	56 799	80 767	67 909	565 746	45 280	67 201	59 230
1.2.2 Instalment sale transactions	372 719	25 025	25 678	29 227	319 888	23 739	20 736	23 953
1.3 Services								
1.3.1 Professional	198 577	17 508	19 779	30 649	178 994	15 975	22 346	21 417
1.3.2 Other	704 882	47 836	52 349	71 367	634 912	42 767	46 082	64 135
1.4 Rent	285 956	22 451	26 933	28 754	200 310	15 855	21 652	21 444
1.5 Money lent	2 913 813	206 065	219 252	275 627	2 715 548	188 213	212 950	256 358
1.6 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	629 694	56 982	73 674	122 130	515 737	47 438	72 097	105 737
1.7 Other	1 663 909	163 057	135 372	158 377	1 170 812	122 471	92 617	111 069

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 (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.

For more information

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