

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for October 2010

Table A – Key figures for the month of October 2010

Actual estimates	October 2010	% change between October 2009 and October 2010	% change between August to October 2009 and August to October 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	101 227	-15,5	-8,1
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	54 747	-23,0	-15,9
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	564,6	-24,6	-18,3

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The three months ended October 2010 reflected an 8,1% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the three months ended October 2009.

The major contributors to the 8,1% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -2,2 percentage points);
- the goods sold category (contributing -2,2 percentage points); and
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -1,9 percentage points) (see Tables 5 and 6).

A year-on-year decrease of 15,5% was recorded in October 2010 for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt (see Table A and Table 7).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 15,9% in the three months ended October 2010 compared with the three months ended October 2009. A 23,0% year-on-year decrease was recorded in October 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements for money lent (contributing -8,4 percentage points), goods sold (contributing -2,6 percentage points) and services (contributing -2,0 percentage points) were the drivers behind the 15,9% decrease (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was an 18,3% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2010 compared with the same period last year. A decrease of 24,6% was recorded between October 2009 and October 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 18,3% decrease in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended October 2010 compared with the same period last year were:

- the money lent category (contributing -6,5 percentage points);
- the 'other debts' category (contributing -4,2 percentage points); and
- the goods sold category (contributing -3,9 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During October 2010, 54 747 civil judgements for debt amounting to R564,6 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R564,6 million were:

- money lent (R184,4 million or 32,7%);
- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (R91,0 million or 16,1%);
- services (R82,7 million or 14,7%); and
- 'other debts' (R82,6 million or 14,6%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

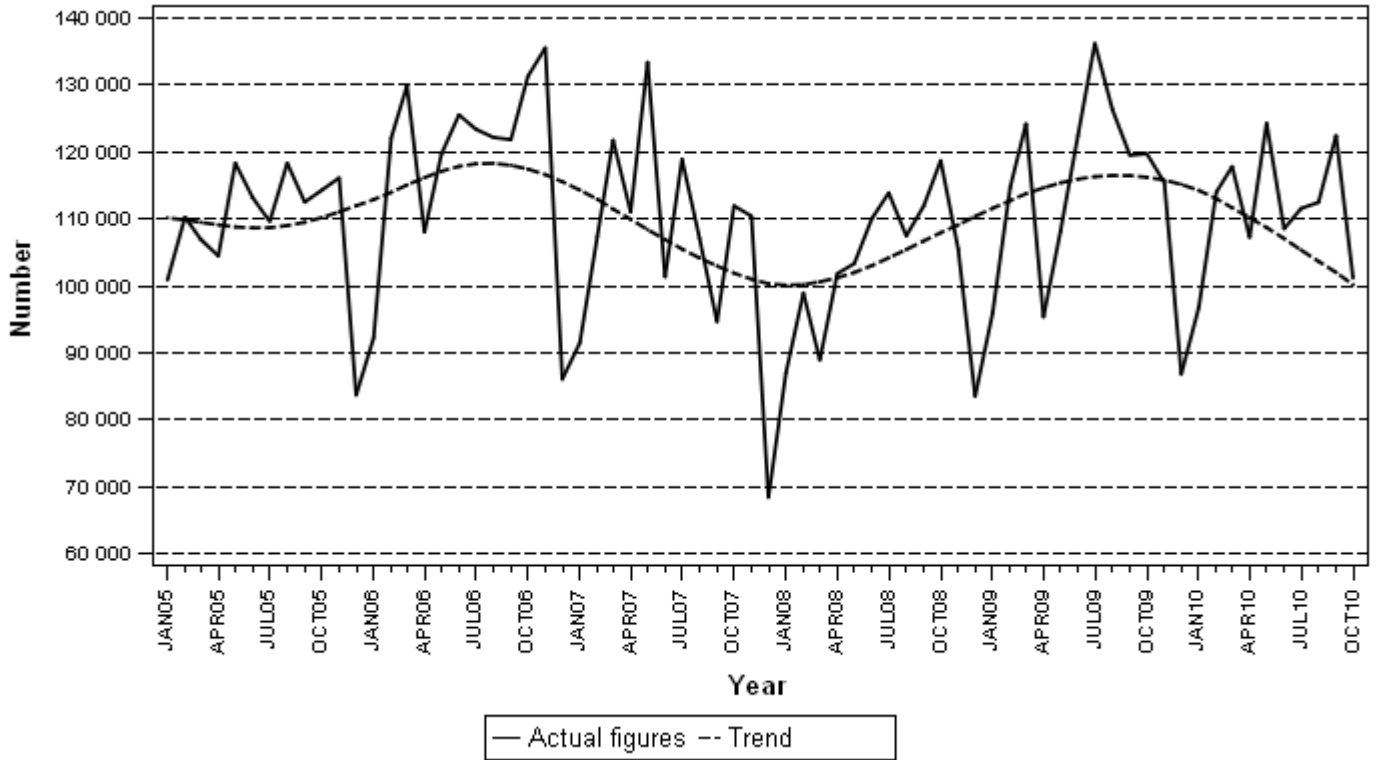
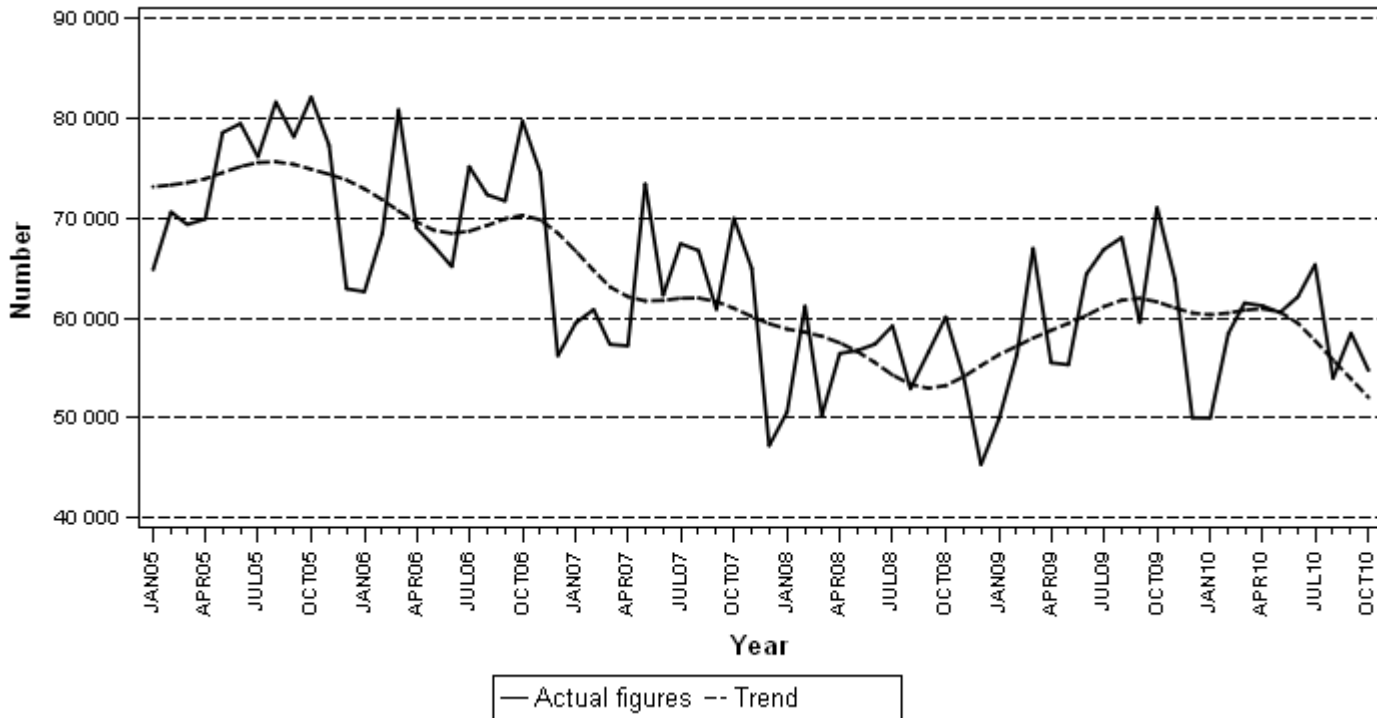


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

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			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		October	September	October		October	September	October
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	138 836	136 162	112 685	1 420 316	122 908	119 638	98 507
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		130 968	132 086	106 963		113 689	123 369	91 542
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	10 354	9 884	7 565	112 717	8 556	7 835	6 130
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	3 281	2 840	2 152	30 583	2 844	2 467	1 814
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	14 395	13 417	12 489	128 153	11 426	11 923	10 591
2.2.2 Other	164 618	15 241	16 026	13 571	142 316	13 213	13 951	11 587
2.3 Rent	51 389	4 338	4 730	5 164	43 153	3 678	3 977	4 394
2.4 Money lent	326 092	26 521	29 990	22 178	308 583	24 515	27 590	20 721
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	23 512	23 932	19 844	227 360	22 164	22 534	18 893
2.6 Other debts	256 599	22 133	21 664	18 264	210 475	18 046	16 918	14 595
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	119 775	122 483	101 227	1 203 340	104 442	107 195	88 725
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		112 590	119 119	95 808		98 182	104 753	84 132

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Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

Year and month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
2008	Year Total	117 171	54 474	17 553	7 236	19 284	78 092	205 869	59 060	33 410	138 384	26 859	33 374
2009	Year Total	134 632	43 416	18 080	8 026	21 618	91 171	260 137	54 501	38 110	152 361	24 302	40 531
	January	8 353	1 955	1 259	515	1 713	7 400	20 427	5 126	2 299	10 835	1 265	4 435
	February	10 331	3 211	1 619	795	1 557	7 766	22 126	5 592	2 742	12 559	1 449	3 645
	March	14 242	5 191	1 759	755	1 807	7 604	20 163	5 618	4 660	14 922	2 339	3 728
	April	9 791	3 286	1 384	538	1 403	7 336	18 223	4 108	2 668	9 863	1 671	2 494
	May	11 016	3 555	1 439	641	1 839	7 483	20 872	4 878	3 120	11 931	3 448	3 554
	June	14 060	3 298	2 364	639	1 537	7 470	24 521	4 495	3 063	12 165	2 698	2 670
	July	12 682	4 276	1 620	806	1 895	7 186	26 907	4 373	3 861	17 167	2 629	3 758
	August	10 659	5 756	1 721	871	1 693	7 967	22 448	3 667	3 181	21 921	2 034	2 971
	September	10 082	3 067	1 394	948	2 161	8 227	25 483	4 587	2 890	11 846	2 781	3 056
	October	12 376	3 973	1 349	542	2 478	7 429	20 819	4 981	3 420	11 304	1 589	3 200
	November	12 435	3 747	1 395	537	2 439	7 834	20 688	4 373	3 710	11 049	1 581	4 000
December	8 605	2 101	777	439	1 096	7 469	17 460	2 703	2 496	6 799	818	3 020	
1/ 2010	January	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 849	10 033	1 066	6 000
	May	13 037	3 004	2 074	618	2 179	8 162	20 002	4 536	3 295	20 265	1 001	6 500
	June	13 991	3 375	1 325	360	2 148	8 055	17 263	4 381	2 841	12 186	881	6 000
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 041	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200
	September	9 700	3 093	345	316	2 883	7 289	27 645	4 505	3 276	13 402	924	6 800
	October	7 341	2 689	939	465	2 019	7 278	16 794	4 712	3 256	12 802	1 546	5 925

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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			
	2009	1/ 2010			2009	1/ 2010		
		2009	September	October		2009	September	October
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	7 858	6 239	6 529	73 332	6 429	5 335	5 720
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	1 408	1 119	1 019	11 200	1 119	913	863
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	7 844	7 615	6 760	80 893	6 839	6 828	6 242
1.2.2 Other	78 652	7 760	7 172	6 472	69 473	6 802	6 420	5 831
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 833	2 435	2 539	22 483	2 290	1 936	2 197
1.4 Money lent	273 794	25 119	20 621	18 666	267 864	24 618	19 965	18 179
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	8 648	5 356	5 411	51 777	7 970	4 647	4 798
1.6 Other debts	95 130	9 601	7 921	7 351	86 580	8 775	7 124	6 637
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	71 071	58 478	54 747	663 602	64 842	53 168	50 467
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		63 403	56 426	49 057		57 033	52 307	44 549

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009		1/ 2010		2009	1/ 2010	
		October	September	September	October		October	September
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	73 006	57 116	57 189	497 848	48 229	35 520	37 698
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	47 802	30 659	23 330	319 087	39 799	24 068	17 844
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	31 525	26 299	21 403	266 902	22 603	21 106	17 296
1.2.2 Other	715 777	77 507	66 248	61 323	556 872	62 385	56 367	49 217
1.3 Rent	459 493	47 086	35 771	43 227	312 500	32 554	22 925	29 129
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	227 054	216 117	184 431	2 411 391	219 042	205 699	164 363
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	107 700	70 775	91 023	627 760	94 606	59 136	80 473
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	136 847	92 971	82 648	975 583	107 744	70 029	66 017
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	748 527	595 956	564 574	5 967 943	626 962	494 850	462 037
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		663 684	583 399	501 697		551 873	502 666	407 336

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Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended October 2009 and the three months ended October 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates August to October 2009	Actual estimates August to October 2010	% change between August to October 2009 and August to October 2010	Difference between August to October 2009 and August to October 2010
Number of summonses for debt	365 671	336 217	-8,1	-29 454
Number of judgements for debt	198 656	167 159	-15,9	-31 497
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	2 043,3	1 669,6	-18,3	-373,7

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended October 2009 and the three months ended October 2010 1/

Item	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
– Open account	-1,8	-2,4	-2,5
– Instalment sale transactions	-0,4	-0,2	-1,4
Services			
– Professional	-0,8	-1,1	-0,5
– Other	-0,2	-0,9	-1,5
Rent	0,3	-0,2	-0,4
Money lent	-2,2	-8,4	-6,5
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,9	-1,4	-1,2
Other debts	-1,2	-1,3	-4,2
Total	-8,1	-15,9	-18,3

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during August to October 2009, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates October 2009	Actual estimates October 2010	% change between October 2009 and October 2010	Difference between October 2009 and October 2010
Number of summonses for debt	119 775	101 227	-15,5	-18 548
Number of judgements for debt	71 071	54 747	-23,0	-16 324
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	748,5	564,6	-24,6	-183,9

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, 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.
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, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for October 2010 was 85,4%. Improved response rate for September 2010 was 92,7%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> 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 as computer printouts or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * 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.
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. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. 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 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 debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and salaries, 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 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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