

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

September 2010

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Key results for September 2010

Table A – Key figures for the month of September 2010

Actual estimates	September 2010	% change between September 2009 and September 2010	% change between July to September 2009 and July to September 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	122 169	2,2	-9,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	58 318	-2,0	-8,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	595,2	-6,9	-11,4

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The third quarter of 2010 reflected a 9,5% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the third quarter of 2009.

The major contributors to the 9,5% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -3,5 percentage points);
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -2,5 percentage points); and
- the goods sold category (contributing -2,0 percentage points) (see Tables 5 and 6).

A year-on-year increase of 2,2% was recorded in September 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 8,8% in the third quarter of 2010 compared with the third quarter of 2009. A decrease of 2,0% was recorded between September 2009 and September 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

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

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was an 11,4% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the third quarter of 2010 compared with the third quarter of 2009. A decrease of 6,9% was recorded between September 2009 and September 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 11,4% decrease in the value of civil judgements for the third quarter of 2010 compared with the third quarter of 2009 were the money lent category (contributing -5,9 percentage points) and the goods sold category (contributing -3,2 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During September 2010, 58 318 civil judgements for debt amounting to R595,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R595,2 million were:

- money lent (R216,1 million or 36,3%);
- 'other debts' (R92,3 million or 15,5%);
- services (R91,7 million or 15,4%); and
- goods sold (R88,2 million or 14,8%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt respectively from January 2005 to September 2010.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

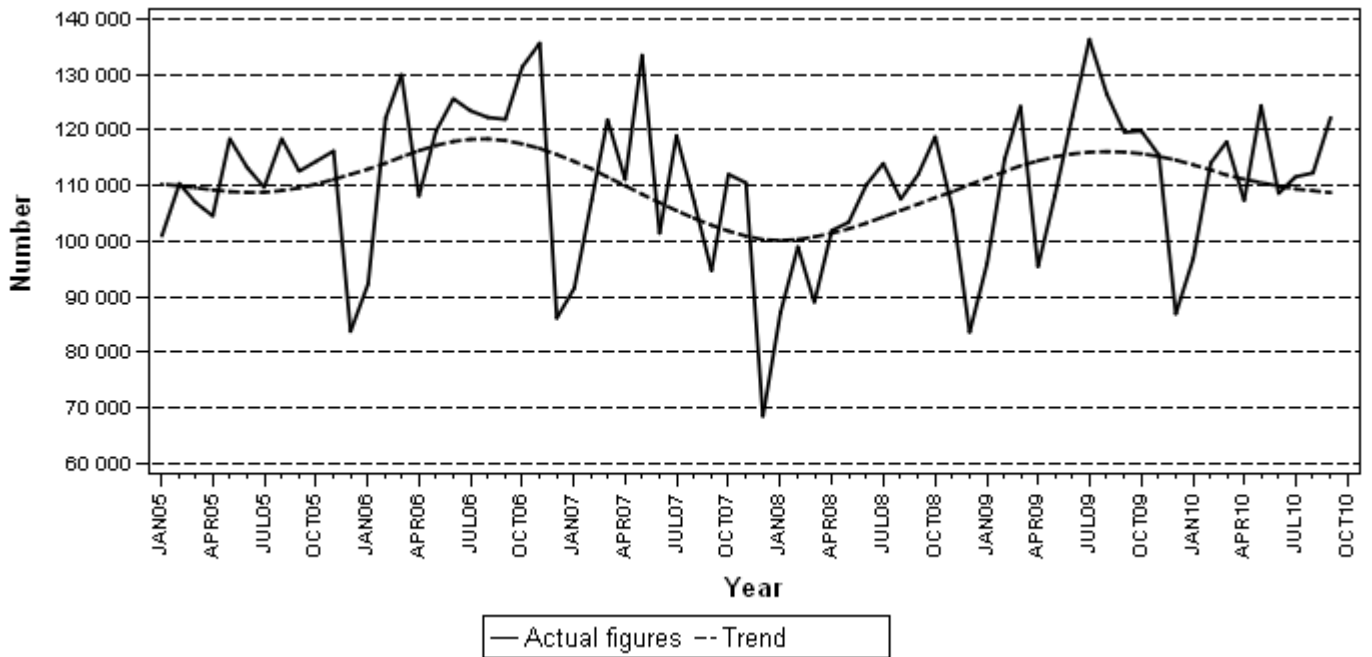
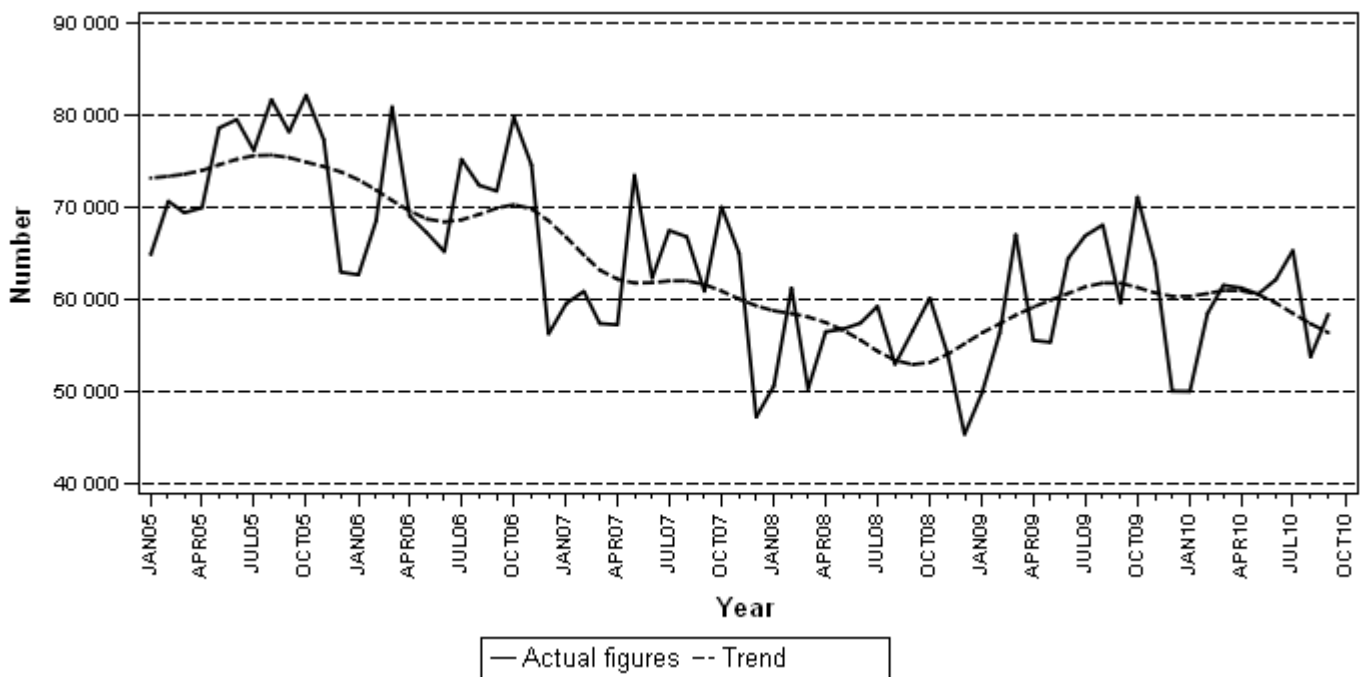


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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	
		September	August	September		September	August	September
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	137 832	124 706	135 846	1 420 316	123 042	109 597	119 554
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		131 305	120 256	128 936		124 630	105 369	121 077
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	10 151	8 643	9 875	112 717	8 259	6 775	8 008
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	2 602	2 505	2 804	30 583	2 266	2 170	2 431
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	13 211	12 730	13 352	128 153	10 879	11 298	11 869
2.2.2 Other	164 618	13 764	13 846	16 041	142 316	12 118	11 943	13 980
2.3 Rent	51 389	4 309	4 478	4 723	43 153	3 520	3 729	3 971
2.4 Money lent	326 092	30 596	27 360	29 891	308 583	28 722	25 810	27 514
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	23 587	20 185	23 813	227 360	22 517	18 955	22 412
2.6 Other debts	256 599	21 316	22 481	21 670	210 475	17 283	18 143	16 924
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	119 536	112 228	122 169	1 203 340	105 564	98 823	107 109
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		114 267	107 557	116 264		101 302	95 141	102 301

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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	5 171	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

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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	August	September		2009 September	August	September
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	7 168	6 105	6 271	73 332	5 903	5 330	5 372
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	969	1 126	1 125	11 200	791	909	919
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	7 567	7 315	7 627	80 893	6 670	6 486	6 845
1.2.2 Other	78 652	6 239	6 178	7 083	69 473	5 557	5 533	6 336
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 306	2 387	2 431	22 483	1 816	2 064	1 927
1.4 Money lent	273 794	23 599	18 839	20 618	267 864	23 196	18 433	19 957
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	4 279	5 011	5 430	51 777	3 754	4 470	4 737
1.6 Other debts	95 130	7 405	6 743	7 733	86 580	6 605	5 944	6 936
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	59 532	53 704	58 318	663 602	54 292	49 169	53 029
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		58 470	52 486	57 304		53 844	48 721	52 663

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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	2009	1/ 2010	
		September	August	September		September	August	September
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	75 683	52 605	57 539	497 848	47 491	34 427	35 805
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	27 955	24 285	30 655	319 087	22 976	18 500	24 064
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	25 886	25 659	26 226	266 902	19 618	19 249	21 078
1.2.2 Other	715 777	58 834	56 139	65 518	556 872	45 999	46 361	55 865
1.3 Rent	459 493	35 286	35 132	35 918	312 500	23 346	22 245	22 963
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	222 704	153 004	216 123	2 411 391	188 842	141 508	205 783
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	64 097	62 227	70 907	627 760	50 927	53 827	59 366
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	128 788	98 775	92 281	975 583	104 261	69 412	69 406
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	639 233	507 826	595 167	5 967 943	503 460	405 529	494 330
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		623 407	504 647	581 141		501 092	411 162	493 598

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Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the third quarter of 2009 and the third quarter of 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates July to September 2009	Actual estimates July to September 2010	% change between July to September 2009 and July to September 2010	Difference between July to September 2009 and July to September 2010
Number of summonses for debt	382 155	345 924	-9,5	-36 231
Number of judgements for debt	194 450	177 297	-8,8	-17 153
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 955,6	1 732,5	-11,4	-223,1

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the third quarter of 2009 and the third quarter of 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	-2,8	-2,5
– Instalment sale transactions	-0,2	0,0	-0,7
Services			
– Professional	-0,7	-0,6	0,0
– Other	0,0	0,6	-1,4
Rent	0,0	-0,4	-0,1
Money lent	-3,5	-6,6	-5,9
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,5	1,4	0,7
Other debts	-0,7	-0,3	-1,5
Total	-9,5	-8,8	-11,4

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 July to September 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 September 2009	Actual estimates September 2010	% change between September 2009 and September 2010	Difference between September 2009 and September 2010
Number of summonses for debt	119 536	122 169	2,2	2 633
Number of judgements for debt	59 532	58 318	-2,0	-1 214
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	639,2	595,2	-6,9	-44,0

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 September 2010 was 91,4%. Improved response rate for August 2010 was 91,4%.
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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