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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

September 2022

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Key results for September 2022

Table A – Key figures for the month of September 2022

Actual estimates	September 2022	% change between September 2021 and September 2022	% change between July – September 2021 and July – September 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	42 384	2,8	11,1
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	11 104	-14,5	-4,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	291,5	-18,3	-5,8

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt increased by 11,1% in the third quarter of 2022 compared with the third quarter of 2021.

The positive contributors to the 11,1% increase were civil summonses relating to:

- 'other' debts (contributing 10,3 percentage points);
- services (contributing 4,8 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing 1,9 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 4,1% in the third quarter of 2022 compared with the third quarter of 2021.

The largest negative contributors to the 4,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- goods sold (contributing -2,4 percentage points);
- rent (contributing -1,6 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -1,4 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 5,8% in the third quarter of 2022 compared with the third quarter of 2021.

The largest negative contributors to the 5,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- goods sold (contributing -3,3 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,2 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,4 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

There were 11 104 civil judgements recorded for debt in September 2022, amounting to R291,5 million. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R94,1 million or 32,3%);
- services (R59,8 million or 20,5%); and
- 'other' debts (R45,4 million or 15,6%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

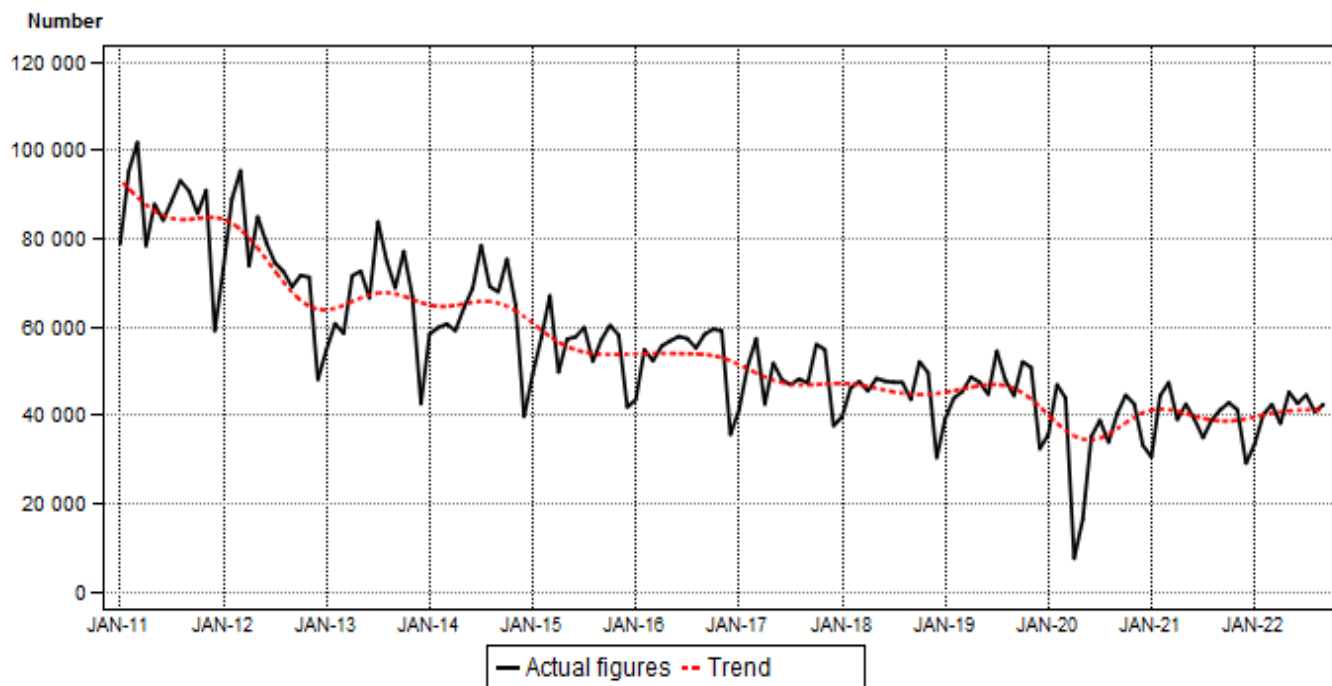
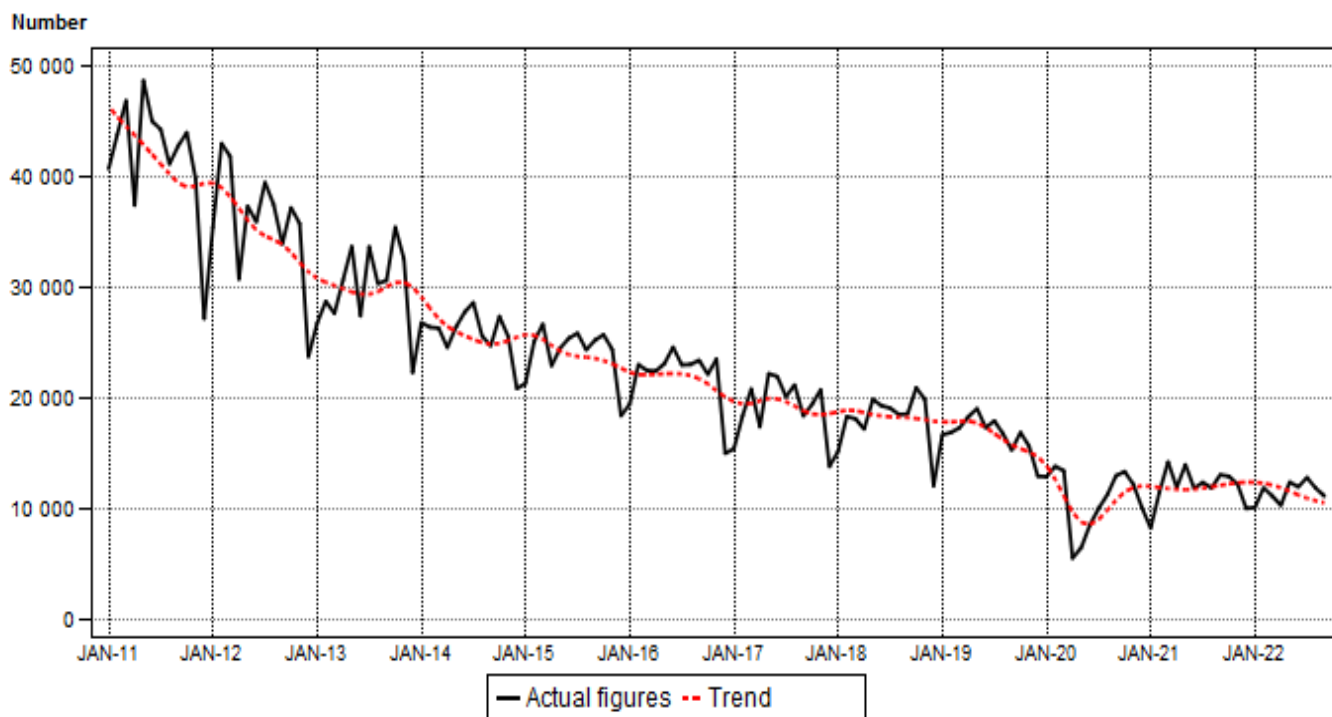


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Sep-21	1/ Aug-22	1/ Sep-22	2021	Sep-21	1/ Aug-22	1/ Sep-22
Cases recorded	Actual figures	494 845	42 721	43 412	45 883	436 556	37 016	35 851	39 436
	Seasonally adjusted		39 916	39 480	43 257		34 453	32 301	37 366
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	22 874	2 123	1 669	1 806	15 198	1 376	1 021	985
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	15 644	1 273	985	1 183	13 175	1 005	742	999
	Services - Professional	48 261	4 006	4 733	5 062	41 729	3 303	3 857	4 031
	Services - Other	71 257	6 503	7 006	6 300	60 342	5 332	5 973	5 278
	Rent	27 753	2 482	1 903	1 696	21 361	1 921	1 329	1 212
	Money lent	116 700	10 736	9 807	10 342	108 854	9 819	9 178	9 768
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 140	6 348	2 849	3 612	56 487	6 023	2 570	3 269
	Other debts	109 473	7 756	11 841	12 383	99 171	7 008	10 746	11 086
	Total - Actual figures	471 102	41 227	40 793	42 384	416 317	35 787	35 416	36 628
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		38 667	37 508	40 483		33 750	33 068	34 651

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2021	Sep-21	1/ Aug-22	1/ Sep-22	2021	Sep-21	1/ Aug-22	1/ Sep-22
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	9 723	838	571	535	6 559	604	328	324
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	5 635	508	366	338	4 762	450	307	288
	Services - Professional	23 496	1 773	2 170	1 733	20 923	1 617	1 904	1 565
	Services - Other	26 540	2 367	2 002	2 297	23 612	2 109	1 758	2 087
	Rent	12 335	1 092	887	884	9 900	911	693	633
	Money lent	31 574	2 997	2 862	2 465	28 531	2 768	2 626	2 290
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	10 081	1 062	982	1 011	9 211	997	924	951
	Other debts	23 940	2 347	1 874	1 841	21 607	2 158	1 584	1 697
	Total - Actual figures	143 324	12 984	11 714	11 104	125 105	11 614	10 124	9 835
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		12 002	10 569	9 947		10 453	9 109	8 441

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2021	Sep-21	1/ Aug-22	1/ Sep-22	2021	Sep-21	1/ Aug-22	1/ Sep-22
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	220 750	21 821	12 109	15 123	103 048	11 127	4 542	6 720
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	204 306	23 388	11 519	9 755	171 819	20 444	9 452	7 510
	Services - Professional	224 848	19 533	22 374	18 551	176 770	17 148	18 092	15 341
	Services - Other	483 619	48 911	42 508	41 222	400 129	38 852	36 855	34 207
	Rent	398 259	40 883	30 203	29 931	295 650	32 512	20 940	24 082
	Money lent	983 153	96 707	94 391	94 111	918 510	89 236	88 462	89 645
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	383 004	40 031	42 555	37 470	340 792	36 424	38 182	33 778
	Other debts	669 111	65 590	54 963	45 382	554 372	56 167	47 305	40 275
	Total - Actual figures	3 567 050	356 864	310 622	291 545	2 961 090	301 910	263 830	251 558
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		321 608	281 600	265 451		273 926	236 995	229 665

1/ Preliminary.

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

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jul – Sep 2021	Actual estimates Jul – Sep 2022	% change between Jul – Sep 2021 and Jul – Sep 2022	Difference between Jul – Sep 2021 and Jul – Sep 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	115 027	127 782	11,1	12 755
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	37 093	35 560	-4,1	-1 533
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	969,5	912,9	-5,8	-56,6

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 third quarter of 2021 and the third 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	-0,2	-1,8	-1,7
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,6	-0,6	-1,6
Services - Professional	2,4	0,9	0,4
Services - Other	2,4	-0,6	-1,8
Rent	-0,5	-1,6	-1,1
Money lent	1,9	0,9	3,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-4,6	0,0	0,0
Other debts	10,3	-1,4	-3,2
Total	11,1	-4,1	-5,8

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 July to September 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 September 2021	Actual estimates September 2022	% change between September 2021 and September 2022	Difference between September 2021 and September 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	41 227	42 384	2,8	1 157
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	12 984	11 104	-14,5	-1 880
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	356,9	291,5	-18,3	-65,4

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	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	8 213	3 083	517	2 919	7 633	2 342	13 658	2 301	1 766	42 432
	Apr	7 778	3 309	505	2 681	5 755	1 695	12 341	2 391	1 646	38 101
	May	8 361	3 659	472	3 308	8 286	2 126	13 324	3 621	2 086	45 243
	Jun	7 922	3 399	620	3 114	7 355	2 077	13 279	3 093	1 792	42 651
	Jul	7 727	3 343	421	2 662	9 140	1 955	14 969	2 647	1 741	44 605
	Aug	7 033	3 323	325	2 782	8 122	2 259	12 815	2 507	1 627	40 793
	Sep	7 941	2 737	538	2 231	8 318	1 715	14 601	2 658	1 645	42 384

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	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	2 005	766	246	2 036	1 302	637	1 965	916	1 205	11 078
	Apr	2 126	760	100	2 157	1 179	352	1 774	672	1 115	10 235
	May	2 632	1 033	186	2 271	1 400	600	1 840	1 008	1 357	12 327
	Jun	2 583	1 273	284	2 077	1 287	620	1 992	564	1 221	11 901
	Jul	3 034	1 046	145	1 948	1 256	695	2 560	782	1 276	12 742
	Aug	2 508	1 074	123	1 379	1 446	771	2 244	898	1 271	11 714
	Sep	2 792	817	120	1 099	1 104	561	2 414	1 007	1 190	11 104

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	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	51 204	16 296	3 691	26 573	49 998	9 640	69 635	19 668	10 786	257 491
	Apr	59 314	15 686	1 636	27 155	46 933	5 011	66 041	11 872	5 996	239 644
	May	98 217	21 145	2 973	29 239	50 136	8 996	71 388	20 450	12 834	315 378
	Jun	72 828	27 652	3 195	27 052	50 610	9 920	73 827	12 184	9 786	287 054
	Jul	97 064	15 767	2 429	27 202	41 498	9 574	91 632	13 852	11 697	310 715
	Aug	80 404	25 292	2 161	25 576	48 822	16 780	83 850	16 494	11 243	310 622
	Sep	91 455	22 358	1 997	18 654	43 461	9 992	74 974	18 322	10 332	291 545

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 September 2022 was 79,8%. The improved collection rate for August 2022 was 81,8%.
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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