

Unemployment reaches 34.9%

The number of unemployed South Africans rose by 0.5% in the third quarter (Q3) of 2021, Statistician-General Risenga Maluleke has announced.



Image source: Andriy Popov – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The rise saw the country's unemployment reach 34.9%.

Releasing the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the last quarter, Maluleke said during this period the number of employed persons decreased by 660,000.

Between July and September, 14.3 million people were in employment.

He said: "The number of unemployed persons decreased by 183,000 to 7.6 million compared to the second quarter of 2021. The number of discouraged work seekers increased by 545,000 (16.4%)."

The number of people who were not economically active for reasons other than discouragement increased by 443,000

(3.3%) between the two quarters resulting in a net increase of 988,000 in the not economically active population, the QLFS shows.

Maluleke said the changes resulted in the official unemployment rate increasing by 0.5 of a percentage point from 34.4% in the second quarter of 2021 to 34.9% in the third quarter of 2021.

This was the highest since the start of the QLFS in 2008.

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) said the unemployment rate, according to the expanded definition of unemployment, increased by 2.2 percentage points to 46.6% in Q3, 2021, compared to Q2, 2021.

The statistics agency said the results indicate that the South African labour market was more favourable to men than it was to women.

“The proportion of men in employment is higher than that of women; more men than women are participating in the labour market as the labour force participation rate of men is higher than that of women; and the unemployment rate among men is lower than among women.

“The unemployment rate among women was 37.3% in the third quarter of 2021 compared to 32.9% among men according to the official definition of unemployment. The official unemployment rate among black African women was 41.5% during this period compared to 9.9% among white women, 25.2% among Indian/ Asian women and 29.1 among coloured women.”

Stats SA said employment decreased by 571,000 (5.6%) in the formal sector, by 65,000 (5.4%) in private households and by 32,000 (3.8%) in Agriculture in Q3, 2021, compared to Q2, 2021. Informal sector employment increased by 9,000 (0.3%) in the same period.

Maluleke said all industries experienced job losses between the last two quarters of 2021 except the finance industry which gained 138 000 jobs. The largest employment decrease was observed in Trade (309,000), followed by community and social services (210,000).

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