

## SA unemployment reaches 34.4% in 2021 Q2

Unemployment in South Africa rose to 34.4% in the second three months of 2021, according to results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS).



Source: Getty Images

The outcome of the QLFS was released by Statistician-General, Risenga Maluleke, on Tuesday.

Addressing reporters, Maluleke said for the second quarter of 2021, the number of employed persons decreased by 54,000, reaching 14.9 million.

Statistics South Africa said the number of unemployed persons increased by 584,000 to 7.8 million compared to the first quarter of 2021.

During this period, the number of discouraged work-seekers increased by 186,000 (5.9%), while the number of people who were not economically active for reasons other than discouragement decreased by 571,000 (4.5%) between the two quarters.

This resulted in a net decrease of 386,000 in the not economically active population.

“These changes resulted in the official unemployment rate increasing by 1.8 percentage points from 32.6% in the first quarter of 2021 to 34.4% in the second quarter of 2021 - the highest since the start of the QLFS in 2008.

“The unemployment rate according to the expanded definition of unemployment increased by 1.2 percentage points to 44.4% in quarter 2, 2021, compared to quarter 1, 2021. The results indicate that the South African labour market is more favourable to men than it is to women,” Maluleke said.

The survey found that men are more likely to be in paid employment than women, regardless of race.

The report found that 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 rate of unemployment among women was 36.8% in the second quarter of 2021 compared to 32.4% among men according to the official definition of unemployment.”

During this period, the unemployment rate among Black African women was 41.0%, compared 8.2% among White women, 22.4% among Indian/Asian women and 29.9% among Coloured women.

Formal sector employment in the three months decreased by 375,000 while the other sectors experienced increases in employment in quarter 2, 2021.

The survey found that informal sector employment during this period increased by 184,000 (7.4%); private households by 67,000 (6.0%), and employment in agriculture increased by 69,000 (8.7%).

In the period under review, the survey found that some industries created jobs while others shed employed between the two quarters.

This resulted in a net decline of 54,000 in total employment.

Employment mainly increased in Construction (up by 143,000) and other industries that had job gains include Trade (108,000), Agriculture (69,000), Private households (67,000) and Transport (66,000). Job losses were observed in Finance (278,000), Community and Social Services (166,000) and Manufacturing (83,000).

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