

# **US** Rates Watch

# SOFR jump: repo ripple now small wave

# **SOFR** increase: shifting cash / collateral balance

SOFR unexpectedly jumped 6bps on Friday to 5.39% (Exhibit 1). This was the largest SOFR spike vs ON RRP since Jan '21 (Exhibit 2). The spike surprised us given it was with no new UST settlements, lower repo volumes, and lower sponsored bi-lateral volumes.

The move is consistent with the slow theme of less cash & more collateral in the system but may have been exacerbated by elevated dealer inventories, bi-lateral borrowing need, and limited excess cash to backstop repo. If funding pressure persists, it risks Fed re-assessment of ample banking system reserves & potential early end to QT.

## SOFR jump: the context & the facts

The context for the large SOFR increase: more collateral, less cash. This can be seen via: large month end UST settlements (\$96b) the day prior, widening range of SOFR transactions between 25th & 75th percentiles (Exhibit 3), recent increase in dealer UST holdings (Exhibit 4), large MMF WAM extension (Exhibit 5), and ON RRP reduction (Exhibit 6). Recent months have also seen a month-end overhang until GSE cash reenters the repo market in the second week of the month.

Details from Friday's SOFR jump: bi-lateral repo rate comprised all of the repo spike (i.e. HF borrowing from dealer), bi-lateral repo volumes declined (including via sponsored), and ON RRP dropped. This suggests HF in need of funding may have had less access to sponsored repo and were forced to pay higher rates demanded by dealers. This may have been especially true given the lack of GSE cash in the repo market.

# SOFR outlook: repo ripple to small wave

We expect SOFR to settle back towards 5.31-5.33% in coming days as more GSE cash enters the market. However, there is likely to be more frequent signs of upward SOFR pressure as cash drains and UST collateral builds.

In late summer we suggested small upward pressure in repo was akin to a ripple but noted expectations for repo movements to build into clearer waves in '24 (see Subtle repo ripple). Signs of small repo waves have already arrived. We now expect these small waves to turn into larger waves by mid '24. Bigger picture implications on next page.

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Rates Research **United States** 

**US Rates Research** 

BofAS +1 646 855 8846

Mark Cabana, CFA

Rates Strategist mark.cabana@bofa.com

**Katie Craig** Rates Strategist BofAS katie.craig@bofa.com

See Team Page for List of Analysts

SOFR = Secured Overnight Financing Rate

ON RRP = Overnight Reverse Repo

UST = US Treasury

QT = Quantitative Tightening

GSE = Government Sponsored Enterprise

HF = Hedge Fund

GC = General Collateral

IOR = Interest on Reserves

MMF = Money Market Funds

WAM = Weighted Average Maturity

SRF = Standing Repo Facility

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# Big picture implications: cash abundance in question

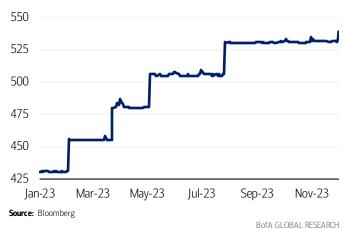
Recent repo pressure calls into question the abundance of cash in funding system. If repo continues to exhibit large jumps it may reflect a lack of excess cash in the system, potential SRF use, and a Fed that may question an earlier end to QT.

As repo was rising on Friday, clients were questioning when the banks might step in to lend cash if GC exceeded IOR. In the '18-'19 period, banks lent cash into repo when GC > IOR by 5-10bps (Exhibit 7). We expect similar behavior today if banks have excess cash, but question the extent to which banks have excess (see <a href="Fed OT: banks fighting to keep liquidity 22 September 2023">Fed OT: banks fighting to keep liquidity 22 September 2023</a>). If banks don't have much excess cash to lend, we could see repo rise sharply in 1H '24 as the ON RRP depletes towards zero. The Fed may then need to question an early QT end.

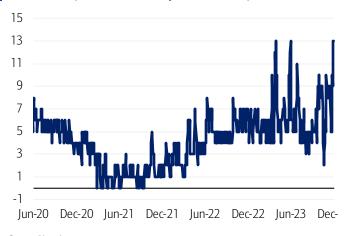
**Bottom line**: SOFR jump on Friday reflects increased UST collateral in need of funding and reduced cash in the system. Bi-lateral funding need appears to have driven the SOFR increase in the context of large UST settlements, higher dealer UST holdings, and a widening range of SOFR transactions. We expect to see more upward pressure on repo in the months ahead. Further upward repo pressure may reflect limited amounts of excess cash in the system and raise the risks of an early end to Fed QT.

# Exhibit 1: Secured overnight e rate (bps)

SOFR peaked at 5.39% on Friday



## Exhibit 3: SOFR 75<sup>th</sup> percentile – 25<sup>th</sup> percentile (bps) SOFR 75<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> percentile has recently widened to 13bps



Source: Bloomberg

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# Exhibit 2: SOFR-ON RRP spread (bps)

SOFR-ON RRP spread of 9bps is widest level since Jan 2021



Source: Bloomberg

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## Exhibit 4: US Treasuries as a % of overall PD holdings

USTs as a % of PD holdings has increased 6ppts vs the prior week of data



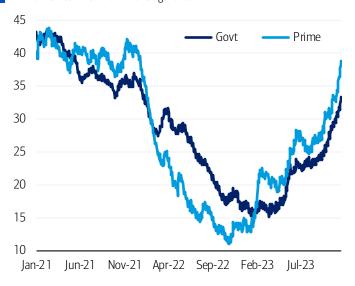
Source: BofA Global Research, Bloomberg

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## Exhibit 5: MMF WAMs (days)

MMFs are near their '20-'21 average levels

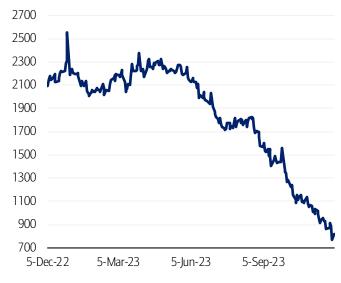


Source: iMoneyNet

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## Exhibit 6: ON RRP take-up

ON RRP take-up has been declining very quickly since early June

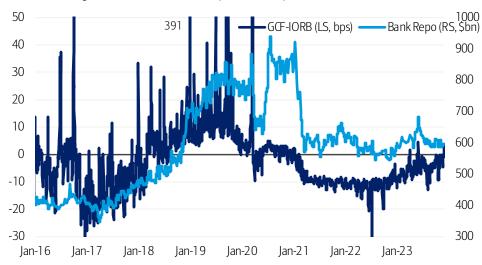


Source: Bloomberg

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# Exhibit 7: Broad GC – IORB spread (bps) versus bank repo holdings

Banks were willing to lend cash in GC when the spread was >5bps



**Source:** Bloomberg, Haver Analytics

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markets

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# **Research Analysts**

Ralph Axel Rates Strategist BofAS ralph.axel@bofa.com

## Bruno Braizinha, CFA

Rates Strategist BofAS

bruno.braizinha@bofa.com

Mark Cabana, CFA Rates Strategist BofAS mark.cabana@bofa.com

## Katie Craig

Rates Strategist BofAS katie.craig@bofa.com

## Meghan Swiber, CFA

Rates Strategist BofAS

meghan.swiber@bofa.com

## Anna (Caiyi) Zhang

Rates Strategist BofAS caiyi.zhang@bofa.com

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