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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for April 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of April 2014

Actual estimates	April 2014	% change between April 2013 and April 2014	% change between Feb – Apr 2013 and Feb – Apr 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	59 092	-17,5	-5,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	24 520	-19,9	-11,0
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	294,5	-25,7	-10,3

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 5,9% in the three months ended April 2014 compared with the three months ended April 2013. A 17,5% decrease was recorded between April 2013 and April 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 5,9% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- goods sold (contributing -2,2 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,4 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,4 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 11,0% in the three months ended April 2014 compared with the three months ended April 2013. A decrease of 19,9% was recorded year-on-year in April 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 11,0% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,7 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,1 percentage points); and
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -2,0 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 10,3% lower in the three months ended April 2014 compared with the three months ended April 2013. A year-on-year decrease of 25,7% was recorded in April 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that contributed to the 10,3% decrease were ‘other’ debts (contributing -4,1 percentage points) and services (contributing -3,4 percentage points).

In April 2014, 24 520 civil judgements for debt amounting to R294,5 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R79,6 million or 27,0%);
- money lent (R76,1 million or 25,9%); and
- services (R54,8 million or 18,6%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

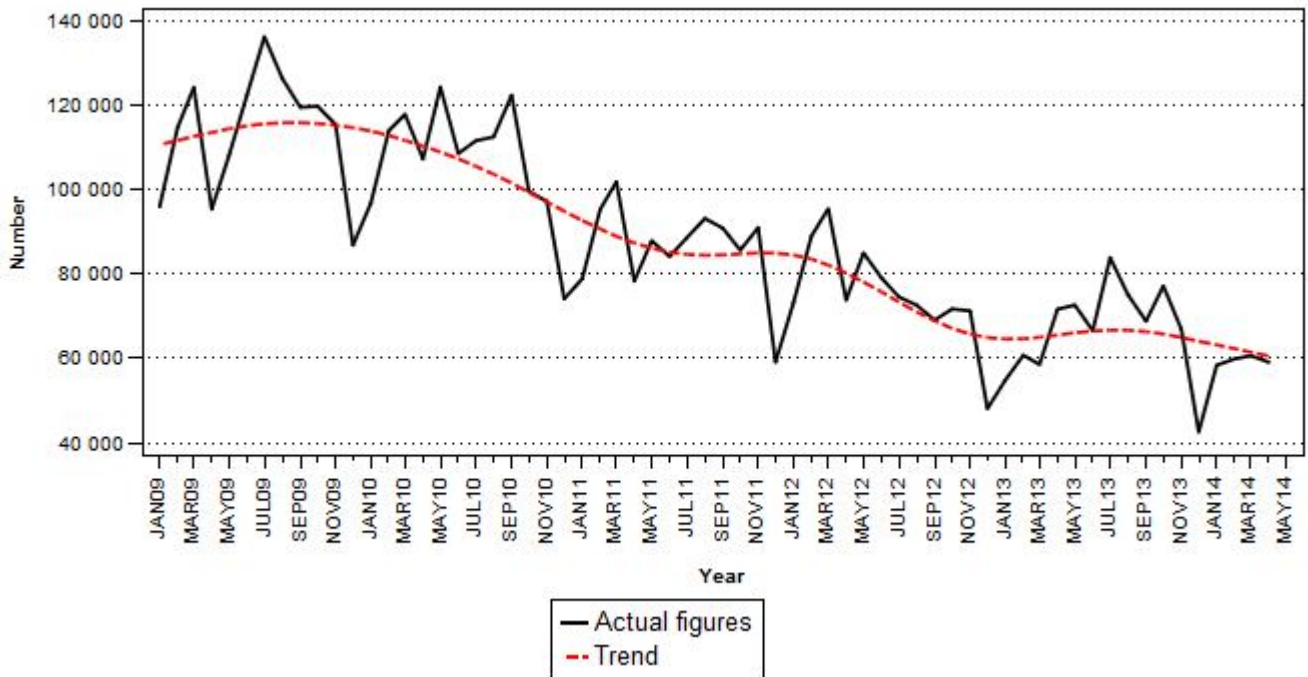
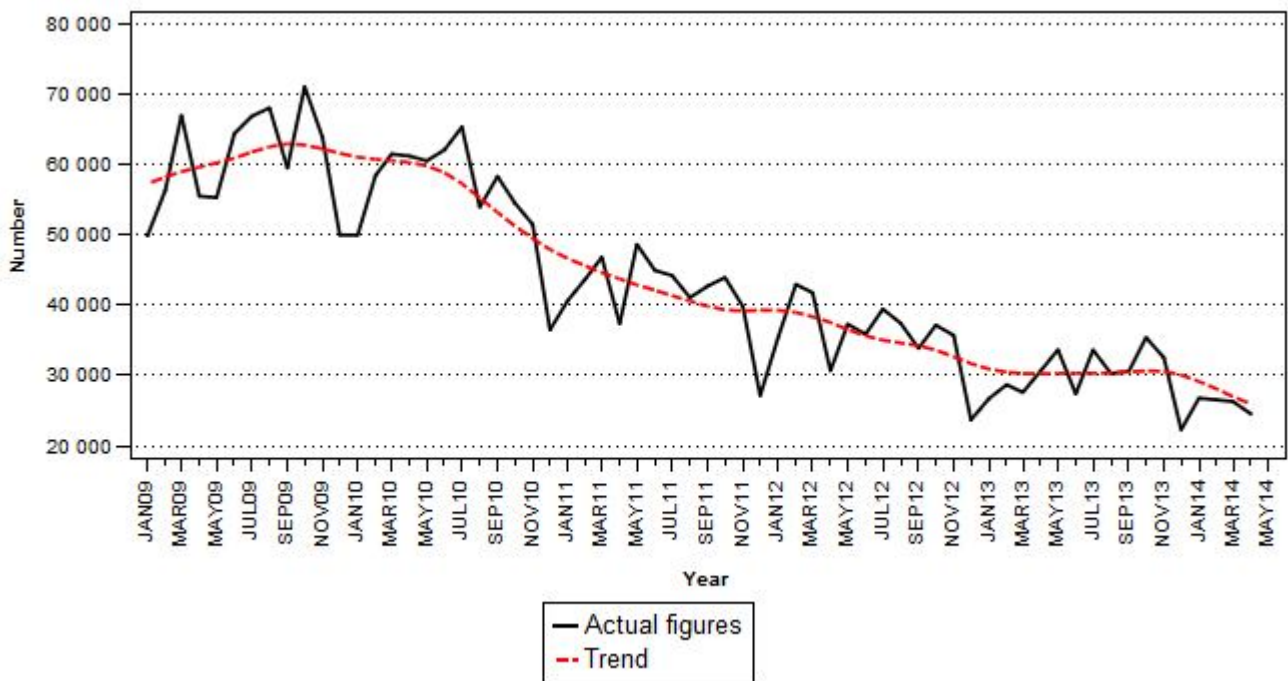


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
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			
		2013	Apr-13	1/ Mar-14	1/ Apr-14	2013	Apr-13	1/ Mar-14	1/ Apr-14
Cases recorded	Actual figures	885 749	80 208	67 518	65 608	771 794	69 623	60 066	58 408
	Seasonally adjusted		83 831	62 130	68 527		71 775	54 307	60 150
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	63 952	5 797	3 875	4 053	50 038	4 366	2 929	3 220
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	25 218	2 315	1 914	1 802	19 245	1 673	1 428	1 363
	Services - Professional	101 682	9 629	7 554	7 902	90 677	8 743	6 526	7 079
	Services - Other	136 140	11 598	10 776	10 402	119 179	9 816	9 599	9 242
	Rent	45 440	3 658	4 094	2 853	36 824	2 746	3 453	2 206
	Money lent	189 742	17 765	14 382	14 974	178 122	16 654	13 547	14 223
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	112 450	9 815	7 123	7 532	98 274	8 604	6 621	7 016
	Other debts	124 497	11 037	10 903	9 574	113 694	10 016	9 476	8 612
	Total - Actual figures	799 121	71 614	60 621	59 092	706 053	62 618	53 579	52 961
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		76 032	54 560	62 775		64 514	47 946	54 441

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Apr-13	1/ Mar-14	1/ Apr-14	2013	Apr-13	1/ Mar-14	1/ Apr-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	30 597	2 691	2 145	1 892	24 387	2 156	1 618	1 443
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 832	592	629	583	5 973	436	464	422
	Services - Professional	54 998	4 711	4 481	4 027	50 090	4 268	4 084	3 667
	Services - Other	54 712	4 383	4 414	3 936	47 374	3 509	3 977	3 487
	Rent	21 197	1 699	1 663	1 465	17 602	1 382	1 358	1 214
	Money lent	95 683	8 496	6 216	5 388	88 994	7 873	5 847	5 097
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	34 524	2 587	2 255	2 455	29 935	2 251	1 868	2 109
	Other debts	59 606	5 470	4 467	4 774	53 777	5 049	4 009	4 411
	Total - Actual figures	359 149	30 629	26 270	24 520	318 132	26 924	23 225	21 850
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		31 856	25 783	25 544		27 520	22 675	22 404

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Apr-13	1/ Mar-14	1/ Apr-14	2013	Apr-13	1/ Mar-14	1/ Apr-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	363 467	29 887	24 719	20 582	210 195	14 906	17 718	12 128
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	122 821	11 626	7 701	7 143	99 484	9 171	6 779	6 000
	Services - Professional	278 838	22 867	24 173	17 925	235 212	17 756	20 218	15 291
	Services - Other	591 004	78 143	36 238	36 844	472 529	62 074	30 949	28 942
	Rent	349 318	26 343	22 784	19 258	242 204	19 168	16 650	13 003
	Money lent	1 207 193	106 098	101 815	76 130	1 088 550	94 514	84 644	67 313
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 317	31 162	46 251	37 019	363 640	25 086	40 676	28 431
	Other debts	1 412 608	90 130	117 866	79 577	785 061	63 324	66 411	55 954
	Total - Actual figures	4 768 566	396 256	381 547	294 478	3 496 875	305 999	284 045	227 062
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		478 759	374 978	358 284		367 109	280 592	273 906

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2013 and the three months ended April 2014

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2013	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2014	% change between Feb – Apr 2013 and Feb – Apr 2014	Difference between Feb – Apr 2013 and Feb – Apr 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	190 882	179 551	-5,9	-11 331
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	86 877	77 293	-11,0	-9 584
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 204,1	1 079,7	-10,3	-124,4

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2013 and the three months ended April 2014 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	-2,0	-2,0	-1,5
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,2	-0,1	-0,8
Services - Professional	-0,9	-0,2	0,1
Services - Other	-0,5	0,7	-3,5
Rent	0,0	0,0	-0,8
Money lent	-0,9	-7,7	-2,3
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,4	0,3	2,6
Other debts	-0,1	-2,0	-4,1
Total	-5,9	-11,0	-10,3

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 during February to April 2013, 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, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates April 2013	Actual estimates April 2014	% change between April 2013 and April 2014	Difference between April 2013 and April 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	71 614	59 092	-17,5	-12 522
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	30 629	24 520	-19,9	-6 109
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	396,3	294,5	-25,7	-101,8

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	April	11 074	6 230	1 580	5 374	9 456	3 631	27 976	3 611	2 682	71 614
	May	11 008	6 336	1 508	4 309	10 208	3 362	28 971	4 163	2 768	72 633
	June	10 023	6 081	1 253	3 993	11 152	2 897	24 611	4 307	2 217	66 534
	July	10 855	7 397	1 512	4 265	11 718	3 260	35 868	6 361	2 630	83 866
	August	11 334	6 537	1 295	4 240	11 335	3 020	29 758	5 026	2 470	75 015
	September	9 595	6 688	1 202	4 026	9 322	3 477	28 280	4 053	2 181	68 824
	October	12 020	8 394	1 316	4 504	9 834	5 022	29 364	4 314	2 367	77 135
	November	10 440	9 898	1 341	3 661	8 806	4 012	22 530	3 632	2 567	66 887
December	5 511	3 662	769	2 781	7 129	3 127	14 984	2 037	2 510	42 510	
2014	January	7 966	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	58 360
	February	8 607	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	59 838
	March	9 475	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 621
	April	9 205	5 230	1 507	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	59 092

Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	April	4 571	3 203	893	2 878	4 070	1 924	8 906	2 169	2 015	30 629
	May	5 724	3 522	993	3 511	4 437	1 795	9 066	2 457	2 129	33 634
	June	4 730	3 033	806	2 969	4 722	1 578	5 453	2 127	1 947	27 365
	July	6 207	3 773	932	3 925	4 191	1 951	6 911	3 327	2 399	33 616
	August	5 295	3 685	714	3 140	4 026	1 805	6 548	2 847	2 216	30 276
	September	5 517	3 181	636	3 087	4 363	2 205	6 821	2 680	2 060	30 550
	October	6 934	4 688	787	3 761	4 852	2 049	8 480	1 668	2 162	35 381
	November	6 940	4 953	895	3 018	3 454	1 935	7 327	1 877	2 119	32 518
December	3 136	3 049	454	1 976	2 834	1 708	6 076	1 096	1 928	22 257	
2014	January	4 216	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	26 761
	February	4 927	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	26 503
	March	4 469	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 270
	April	4 106	2 866	697	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	24 520

Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	April	94 975	41 449	7 967	36 400	41 274	26 230	112 388	26 872	8 701	396 256
	May	74 791	41 251	8 012	45 892	42 781	21 925	132 074	45 942	11 078	423 746
	June	98 333	33 353	9 398	25 685	47 257	20 047	90 254	27 175	8 106	359 608
	July	105 792	41 710	12 998	36 692	41 288	22 732	93 671	49 235	19 740	423 858
	August	122 733	40 579	8 300	28 319	38 692	23 111	119 218	56 016	8 938	445 906
	September	105 675	39 566	5 937	30 535	44 384	16 935	111 888	38 798	8 567	402 285
	October	111 222	53 381	8 146	35 366	49 516	20 792	125 777	34 525	11 810	450 535
	November	127 932	53 314	8 770	34 547	31 398	25 062	103 849	44 688	9 879	439 439
December	56 826	33 514	4 047	19 776	39 281	17 039	98 680	25 380	12 177	306 720	
2014	January	65 434	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	313 460
	February	118 946	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 968	403 694
	March	74 595	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 547
	April	75 780	38 704	6 650	22 228	30 141	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	294 478

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 mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for April 2014 was 87,7%. The improved collection rate for March 2014 was 89,2%.
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>South African 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 * 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 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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