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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 2015

Table A – Key figures for the month of April 2015

Actual estimates	April 2015	% change between April 2014 and April 2015	% change between February – April 2014 and February – April 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	49 810	-15,8	-2,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	22 839	-6,7	-3,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	321,7	10,0	3,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 2,9% in the three months ended April 2015 compared with the three months ended April 2014. A year-on-year decrease of 15,8% was recorded between April 2014 and April 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The largest negative contributions to the 2,9% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -2,8 percentage points);
- rent (contributing -1,6 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -0,5 of a percentage point) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 3,3% in the three months ended April 2015 compared with the three months ended April 2014. A decrease of 6,7% was recorded between April 2014 and April 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The largest negative contributions to the 3,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -3,8 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -1,2 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 3,1% higher in the three months ended April 2015 compared with the three months ended April 2014. A year-on-year increase of 10,0% was recorded in April 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The largest positive contributions to the 3,1% increase were the value of judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing 2,1 percentage points);
- rent (contributing 0,9 of a percentage point); and
- promissory notes (contributing 0,7 of a percentage point) – see Table 5.

In April 2015, 22 839 civil judgements for debt amounting to R321,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R93,6 million or 29,1%);
- money lent (R85,3 million or 26,5%); and
- services (R56,9 million or 17,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

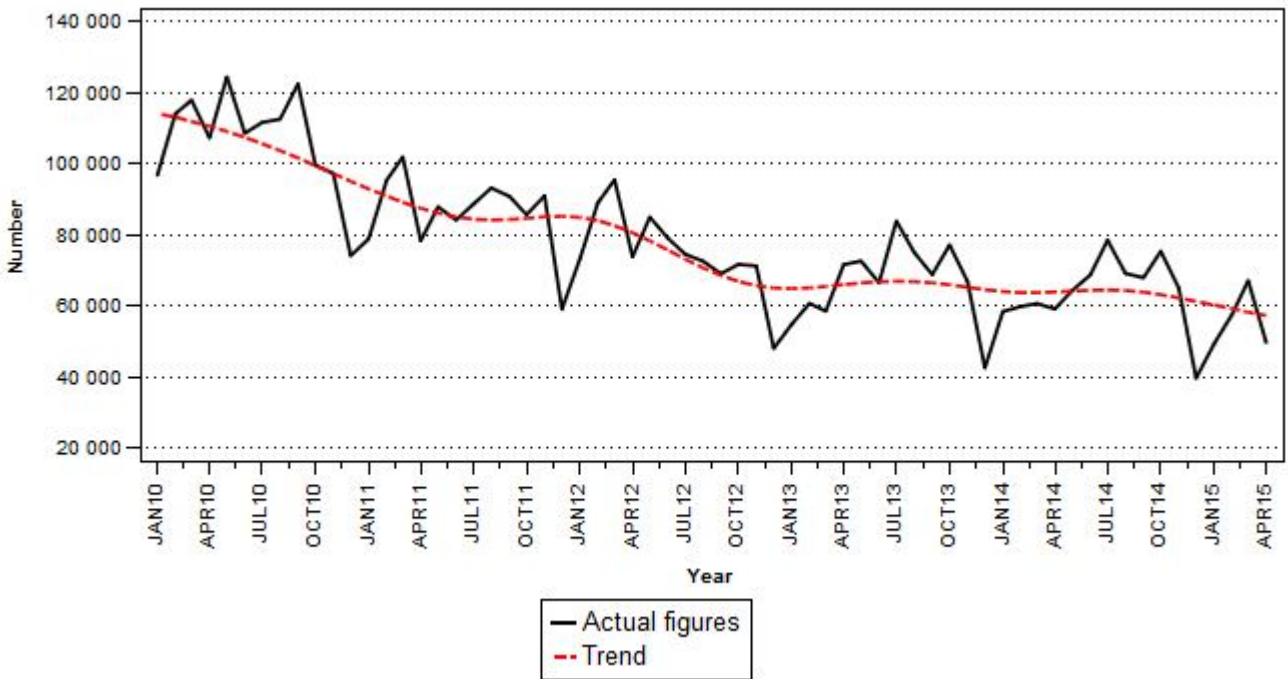
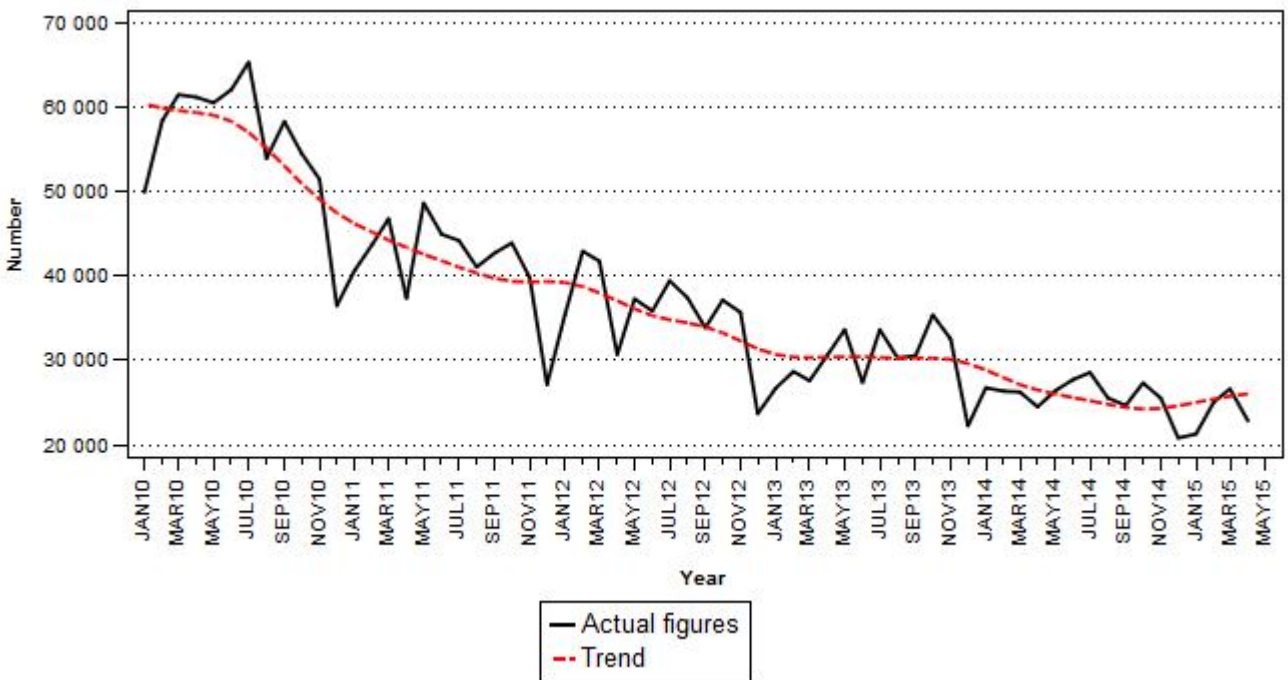


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2014	Apr-14	1/ Mar-15	1/ Apr-15	2014	Apr-14	1/ Mar-15	1/ Apr-15
Cases recorded	Actual figures	838 926	65 645	72 493	56 733	738 542	58 431	59 967	50 085
	Seasonally adjusted		71 237	67 530	61 578		62 517	56 538	53 606
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	53 702	4 090	4 222	3 221	41 998	3 243	3 305	2 392
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	26 973	1 794	2 137	1 727	21 678	1 356	1 641	1 314
	Services - Professional	93 548	7 885	7 985	6 523	83 216	7 063	6 578	5 740
	Services - Other	124 116	10 379	11 355	8 110	107 931	9 223	9 938	6 952
	Rent	39 481	2 855	2 951	2 255	32 456	2 212	2 325	1 833
	Money lent	199 369	15 008	17 586	12 271	189 974	14 257	16 827	11 464
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	98 753	7 555	8 988	5 841	91 037	7 035	8 455	5 384
	Other debts	130 908	9 582	11 885	9 862	117 735	8 614	10 927	8 880
	Total - Actual figures	766 850	59 148	67 109	49 810	686 025	53 003	59 996	43 959
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		65 048	62 035	54 718		58 116	52 368	48 232

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Apr-14	1/ Mar-15	1/ Apr-15	2014	Apr-14	1/ Mar-15	1/ Apr-15
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	21 883	1 888	1 793	1 620	16 688	1 440	1 378	1 261
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 381	548	726	600	5 580	385	528	439
	Services - Professional	53 262	3 992	4 866	3 567	47 696	3 621	4 117	3 020
	Services - Other	47 316	3 945	3 565	3 043	41 425	3 483	3 077	2 513
	Rent	17 543	1 464	1 722	1 617	14 406	1 216	1 438	1 347
	Money lent	75 586	5 429	6 578	5 525	70 978	5 139	6 123	5 129
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 335	2 444	2 765	2 533	23 145	2 101	2 427	2 225
	Other debts	59 879	4 777	4 596	4 334	55 630	4 418	4 284	4 058
	Total - Actual figures	310 185	24 487	26 611	22 839	275 548	21 803	23 372	19 992
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		27 670	26 101	25 732		23 373	23 021	21 455

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Apr-14	1/ Mar-15	1/ Apr-15	2014	Apr-14	1/ Mar-15	1/ Apr-15
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	289 100	20 618	26 673	19 683	166 780	12 148	17 497	12 865
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	89 599	6 970	8 209	6 798	75 311	5 839	6 714	6 024
	Services - Professional	268 653	17 841	23 710	19 344	234 985	15 344	19 800	14 650
	Services - Other	470 117	36 771	46 336	37 590	375 093	28 963	29 898	29 488
	Rent	277 582	19 350	28 773	25 847	201 587	13 061	21 747	18 760
	Money lent	1 085 532	74 681	94 732	85 253	1 002 428	67 581	88 914	81 378
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	418 697	36 960	51 876	33 555	349 493	28 378	44 739	30 478
	Other debts	1 201 729	79 299	145 015	93 592	779 107	55 927	129 054	65 628
	Total - Actual figures	4 101 009	292 490	425 324	321 662	3 184 784	227 241	358 363	259 271
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		344 647	413 357	378 361		270 368	346 525	308 142

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2014 and the three months ended April 2015

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2014	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2015	% change between Feb – April 2014 and Feb – April 2015	Difference between Feb – April 2014 and Feb – April 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	179 680	174 473	-2,9	-5 207
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	77 063	74 500	-3,3	-2 563
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 076,2	1 110,1	3,1	33,9

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 three months ended April 2014 and the three months ended April 2015 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	-0,8	-1,6	0,2
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,3	0,4	0,3
Services - Professional	-1,1	0,1	0,1
Services - Other	-1,7	-3,9	-0,3
Rent	-1,6	-0,2	0,9
Money lent	0,9	0,9	2,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-0,4	1,2	0,7
Other debts	1,5	-0,2	-0,9
Total	-2,9	-3,3	3,1

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 February to April 2014, 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 April 2014	Actual estimates April 2015	% change between April 2014 and April 2015	Difference between April 2014 and April 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	59 148	49 810	-15,8	-9 338
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	24 487	22 839	-6,7	-1 648
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	292,5	321,7	10,0	29,2

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
2014	Apr	9 252	5 239	1 507	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	59 148
	May	9 760	6 894	1 445	4 044	8 469	3 089	25 278	3 193	2 190	64 362
	Jun	13 090	5 587	1 276	4 254	9 564	3 357	25 994	3 107	2 456	68 685
	Jul	12 853	6 730	1 505	4 864	10 610	3 691	32 249	3 514	2 462	78 478
	Aug	8 714	6 089	1 282	3 903	10 645	3 754	28 346	3 988	2 419	69 140
	Sep	12 079	5 130	976	4 000	10 359	3 230	26 895	3 052	2 228	67 949
	Oct	11 293	6 285	1 250	5 372	11 448	4 725	29 319	3 402	2 287	75 381
	Nov	9 614	5 420	845	4 071	9 974	3 968	25 024	3 739	2 390	65 045
Dec	7 799	2 266	420	2 578	7 701	3 329	12 097	1 533	1 996	39 719	
2015	Jan	7 140	4 573	836	3 513	8 559	2 831	17 487	2 363	2 032	49 334
	Feb	8 706	5 058	854	4 090	8 512	3 285	21 552	3 182	2 315	57 554
	Mar	11 105	5 267	758	3 774	9 790	3 322	26 436	3 976	2 681	67 109
	Apr	8 783	3 847	695	3 207	8 538	2 618	16 889	3 053	2 180	49 810

1/ Latest two 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
2014	Apr	4 062	2 877	697	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	24 487
	May	4 095	3 686	812	2 586	3 629	1 161	6 519	1 907	1 956	26 351
	Jun	5 315	4 102	766	3 401	3 595	1 518	5 413	1 628	1 960	27 698
	Jul	5 529	3 913	631	3 607	3 685	1 515	5 884	1 743	2 044	28 551
	Aug	4 491	3 117	721	2 783	3 699	1 281	6 266	1 228	1 946	25 532
	Sep	4 662	2 946	684	2 342	4 051	1 300	5 535	1 368	1 765	24 653
	Oct	4 828	3 861	691	3 413	3 795	1 815	5 578	1 572	1 757	27 310
	Nov	3 879	3 860	509	2 925	3 669	1 440	5 915	1 497	1 808	25 502
Dec	3 339	2 104	225	2 342	3 333	1 131	5 350	1 264	1 697	20 785	
2015	Jan	2 852	2 905	321	2 882	3 409	1 205	4 214	1 666	1 801	21 255
	Feb	3 567	3 949	412	2 689	3 559	1 607	5 806	1 591	1 870	25 050
	Mar	4 342	3 578	486	2 653	3 874	1 641	6 259	1 696	2 082	26 611
	Apr	3 287	2 714	500	2 704	3 527	1 241	5 595	1 407	1 864	22 839

1/ Latest two 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
2014	Apr	75 402	37 096	6 650	22 227	30 140	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	292 490
	May	72 011	43 019	9 208	22 470	36 772	11 295	95 198	45 389	9 345	344 707
	Jun	91 053	43 723	5 073	32 985	34 968	12 856	72 497	21 943	12 050	327 148
	Jul	84 131	52 402	4 934	33 840	34 975	14 670	79 929	33 696	11 747	350 324
	Aug	56 977	41 055	5 043	27 985	38 151	14 280	97 007	19 280	11 649	311 427
	Sep	68 262	47 878	6 171	37 095	36 823	12 234	83 259	33 117	8 587	333 426
	Oct	73 833	41 426	8 712	48 906	43 394	20 149	87 208	44 660	8 676	376 964
	Nov	81 253	53 761	4 067	40 578	38 954	15 472	91 607	38 341	8 577	372 610
Dec	57 430	26 458	1 736	39 417	34 484	12 296	92 523	23 160	7 748	295 252	
2015	Jan	35 749	39 694	4 390	32 879	37 581	12 314	71 538	28 996	9 362	272 503
	Feb	60 494	62 150	3 894	41 807	39 312	23 497	87 033	35 345	9 539	363 071
	Mar	121 088	58 993	3 709	31 817	45 096	21 926	106 877	23 272	12 546	425 324
	Apr	62 810	47 176	4 018	28 057	39 357	11 619	88 888	28 112	11 625	321 662

1/ Latest two 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 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 2015 was 86,7%. The improved collection rate for March 2015 was 87,2%.
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.
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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