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Statistics of civil cases for debt
(Preliminary)

April 2018

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Key results for April 2018

Table A – Key figures for the month of April 2018

Actual estimates	April 2018	% change between April 2017 and April 2018	% change between February – April 2017 and February – April 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	45 463	7,1	-7,7
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	17 124	-1,2	-5,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	305,9	11,4	6,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 7,7% in the three months ended April 2018 compared with the three months ended April 2017.

The largest negative contributions to the 7,7% decrease for civil summonses issued were:

- money lent (contributing -3,8 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -2,4 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -0,9 of a percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 5,2% in the three months ended April 2018 compared with the three months ended April 2017.

The largest negative contributions to the 5,2% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -4,3 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -0,9 of a percentage point);
- services (contributing -0,7 of a percentage point); and
- promissory notes (contributing -0,7 of a percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 6,1% in the three months ended April 2018 compared with the three months ended April 2017.

The largest positive contributions to the 6,1% increase were the value of judgements relating to:

- 'other' debts (contributing 3,3 percentage points);
- services (contributing 2,0 percentage points);
- rent (contributing 1,2 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing 1,0 percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In April 2018, 17 124 civil judgements for debt amounting to R305,9 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R85,1 million or 27,8%);
- services (R64,8 million or 21,2%); and
- 'other' debts (R61,2 million or 20,0%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

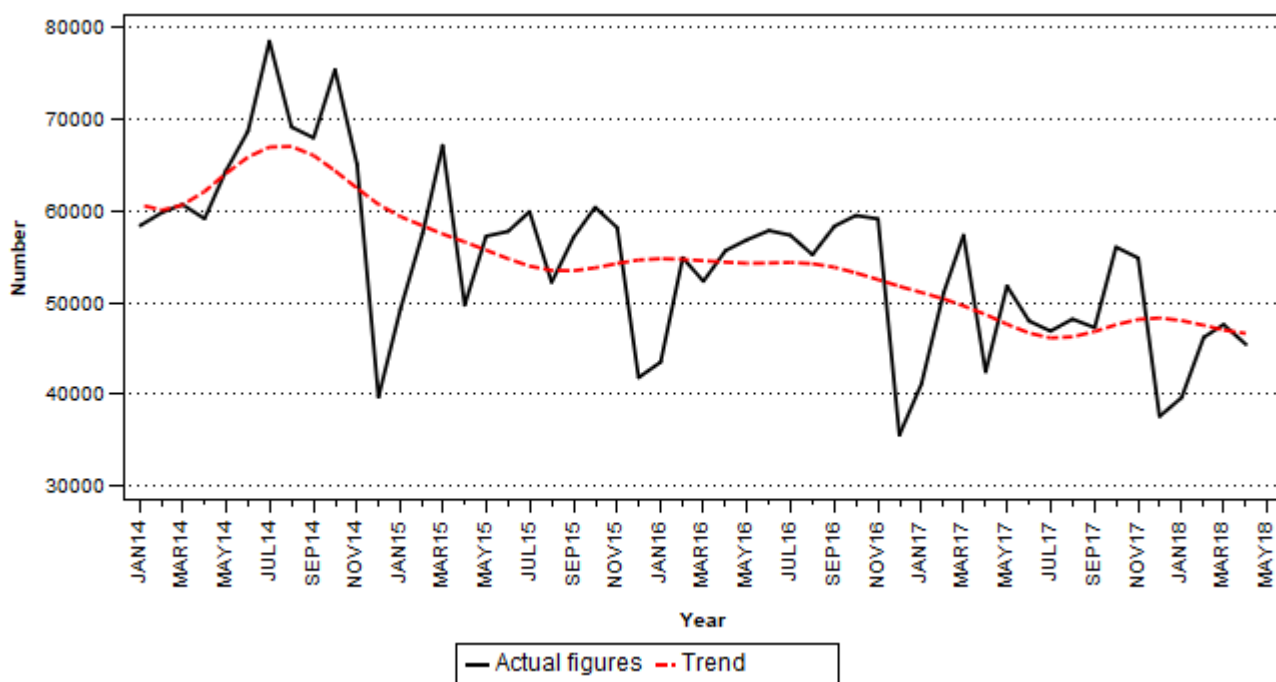
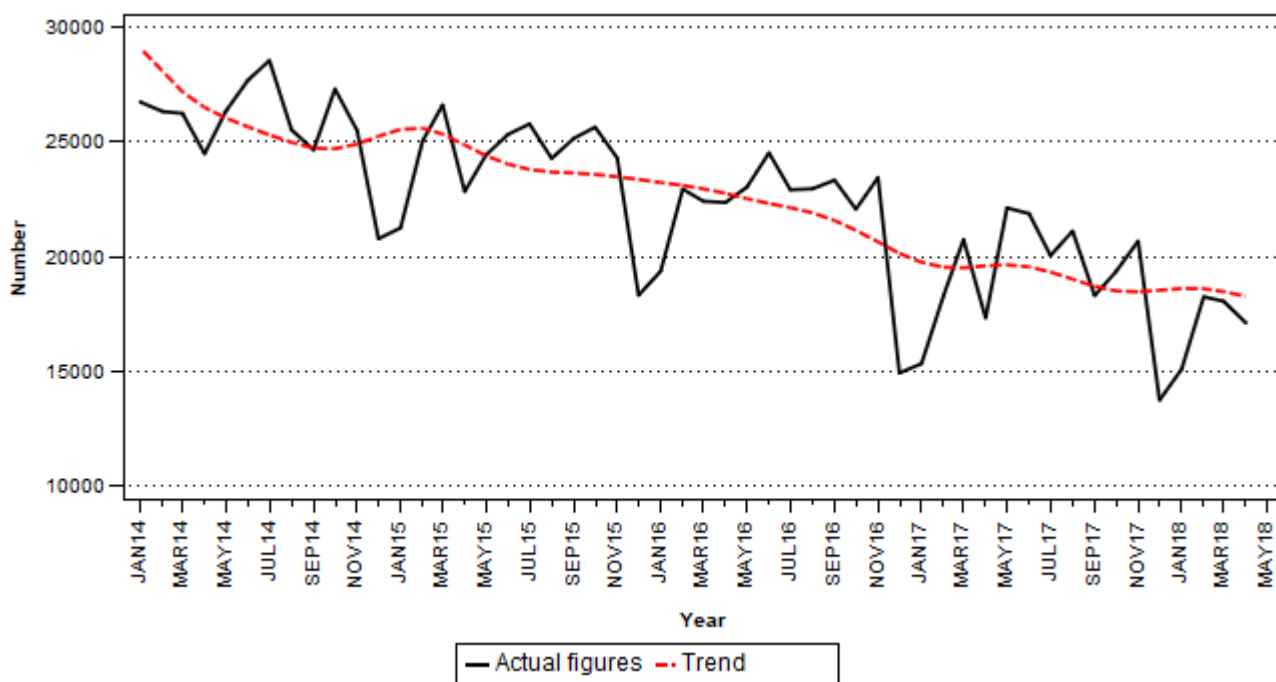


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



Risenga Maluleke
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			
		2017	Apr-17	1/ Mar-18	1/ Apr-18	2017	Apr-17	1/ Mar-18	1/ Apr-18
Cases recorded	Actual figures	639 355	45 183	50 412	48 419	548 538	37 068	44 176	41 740
	Seasonally adjusted		51 472	52 206	47 533		42 714	46 074	41 644
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	34 961	2 517	2 754	2 517	25 426	1 832	1 999	1 720
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	21 233	1 818	1 531	1 626	16 778	1 470	1 200	1 263
	Services - Professional	71 206	5 570	6 300	5 806	62 068	4 916	5 717	5 174
	Services - Other	98 488	8 085	8 147	8 228	83 660	6 887	6 883	7 023
	Rent	31 726	2 254	2 777	2 680	23 540	1 500	1 950	1 984
	Money lent	131 098	9 316	9 799	9 901	123 147	8 754	9 234	9 367
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	82 316	5 724	6 527	5 492	75 454	5 117	6 112	5 032
	Other debts	111 715	7 174	9 780	9 213	98 973	6 364	8 738	8 469
	Total - Actual figures	582 743	42 458	47 615	45 463	509 046	36 840	41 833	40 032
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		48 679	49 230	44 527		42 542	43 050	39 292

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2017	Apr-17	1/ Mar-18	1/ Apr-18	2017	Apr-17	1/ Mar-18	1/ Apr-18	
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	14 897	1 044	1 260	1 091	11 296	809	997	787
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	6 829	568	579	497	5 912	489	496	419
	Services - Professional	35 673	2 661	2 826	2 627	32 574	2 426	2 607	2 419
	Services - Other	35 552	2 315	2 946	2 744	31 207	1 991	2 599	2 372
	Rent	18 112	1 266	1 654	1 663	15 155	1 060	1 380	1 374
	Money lent	50 369	4 038	3 491	3 334	46 408	3 782	3 204	2 992
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	25 826	1 981	2 033	1 628	22 218	1 761	1 803	1 388
	Other debts	41 748	3 459	3 271	3 540	38 438	3 307	2 955	3 231
	Total - Actual figures	229 006	17 332	18 060	17 124	203 208	15 625	16 041	14 982
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		19 514	18 983	17 272		17 875	16 475	15 390

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2017	Apr-17	1/ Mar-18	1/ Apr-18	2017	Apr-17	1/ Mar-18	1/ Apr-18	
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	243 233	15 494	17 049	17 335	115 847	8 141	10 217	8 216
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	133 486	8 899	11 262	10 655	115 030	7 240	10 354	8 503
	Services - Professional	258 424	18 407	19 556	20 545	229 419	16 360	17 222	16 787
	Services - Other	493 962	29 599	40 481	44 264	405 530	24 291	33 051	35 537
	Rent	351 978	23 137	27 978	32 193	243 565	15 429	18 817	23 138
	Money lent	1 163 947	92 311	86 596	85 064	1 064 361	84 012	79 298	77 547
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	533 411	35 126	47 120	34 636	463 911	30 579	41 801	29 267
	Other debts	770 054	51 711	78 757	61 206	627 839	45 041	57 797	50 387
	Total - Actual figures	3 948 495	274 684	328 799	305 898	3 265 502	231 093	268 557	249 382
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		327 491	326 239	332 548		278 344	267 260	267 403

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 2017 and the three months ended April 2018

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2017	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2018	% change between Feb – Apr 2017 and Feb – Apr 2018	Difference between Feb – Apr 2017 and Feb – Apr 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	150 850	139 298	-7,7	-11 552
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	56 395	53 438	-5,2	-2 957
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	914,0	970,1	6,1	56,1

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 2017 and the three months ended April 2018 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	-0,2	-0,4	-0,2
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,2	0,1	0,9
Services - Professional	-0,4	-1,1	0,0
Services - Other	-0,5	0,4	2,0
Rent	0,3	1,6	1,2
Money lent	-3,8	-4,3	-1,9
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,4	-0,7	1,0
Other debts	-0,6	-0,9	3,3
Total	-7,7	-5,2	6,1

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 2017, 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 2017	Actual estimates April 2018	% change between April 2017 and April 2018	Difference between April 2017 and April 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	42 458	45 463	7,1	3 005
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	17 332	17 124	-1,2	-208
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	274,7	305,9	11,4	31,2

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
2017	Apr	6 795	3 197	618	2 807	7 746	1 954	15 012	1 999	2 330	42 458
	May	9 102	4 100	808	3 355	9 295	2 358	18 167	2 530	2 096	51 811
	Jun	7 263	3 923	568	3 529	8 739	2 083	17 602	2 270	2 025	48 002
	Jul	7 914	3 368	876	2 755	8 662	2 079	16 897	2 249	2 102	46 902
	Aug	8 188	3 820	913	3 724	9 297	2 282	15 858	2 269	1 857	48 208
	Sep	7 081	3 527	531	3 500	9 689	2 258	16 361	2 356	1 975	47 278
	Oct	10 612	4 025	941	4 133	10 752	2 368	18 640	2 427	2 161	56 059
	Nov	9 654	4 116	748	3 737	11 055	2 139	18 751	2 550	2 118	54 868
Dec	6 850	2 203	384	1 956	7 041	1 146	14 575	1 888	1 560	37 603	
2018	Jan	6 312	3 035	586	2 312	7 128	1 678	14 999	1 899	1 707	39 656
	Feb	8 192	3 608	801	3 278	7 521	1 888	16 875	2 259	1 798	46 220
	Mar	8 202	3 446	651	3 249	8 353	2 093	17 527	2 058	2 036	47 615
	Apr	7 784	3 546	507	3 239	7 737	1 892	16 210	2 547	2 001	45 463

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
2017	Apr	2 475	2 309	351	2 185	3 386	781	3 664	863	1 318	17 332
	May	4 442	2 732	480	2 594	3 954	1 006	4 610	1 048	1 262	22 128
	Jun	3 368	3 627	389	2 370	3 964	1 100	4 256	1 159	1 646	21 879
	Jul	3 314	2 584	381	2 424	3 951	909	4 306	930	1 252	20 051
	Aug	3 418	2 614	412	2 409	4 586	985	4 460	1 025	1 210	21 119
	Sep	2 524	2 093	359	1 915	4 337	914	4 010	1 052	1 102	18 306
	Oct	2 698	2 567	464	2 016	4 308	674	4 443	1 053	1 133	19 356
	Nov	3 214	2 668	488	2 023	4 837	831	4 227	1 207	1 186	20 681
Dec	2 311	1 409	238	1 329	2 311	658	3 575	891	1 027	13 749	
2018	Jan	1 738	2 247	284	1 910	2 919	708	3 494	779	1 020	15 099
	Feb	2 355	2 611	409	1 992	3 775	661	3 925	1 401	1 125	18 254
	Mar	3 141	2 324	360	1 839	3 736	518	3 761	1 233	1 148	18 060
	Apr	2 768	1 790	217	1 686	3 737	716	3 874	1 187	1 149	17 124

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
2017	Apr	50 854	43 565	3 289	25 210	40 619	11 248	68 299	18 608	12 992	274 684
	May	93 019	57 820	5 662	36 927	53 567	15 437	109 482	20 889	10 124	402 927
	Jun	66 175	42 752	5 050	35 011	42 347	16 976	100 206	27 212	14 320	350 049
	Jul	75 513	42 107	3 528	28 203	48 404	15 257	117 998	21 315	11 234	363 559
	Aug	72 344	56 148	3 477	33 413	64 052	13 728	109 487	18 897	8 456	380 002
	Sep	62 053	43 197	3 507	21 904	43 157	14 234	106 964	20 044	5 722	320 782
	Oct	59 381	52 158	4 550	25 920	58 123	10 015	108 307	20 078	6 782	345 314
	Nov	72 121	40 185	5 575	27 027	69 361	11 174	92 519	24 124	8 214	350 300
Dec	65 295	30 452	2 864	21 973	33 524	12 241	87 845	21 737	4 792	280 723	
2018	Jan	41 641	39 039	2 615	27 666	39 368	11 274	72 582	27 316	6 535	268 036
	Feb	56 659	46 144	4 346	27 455	47 848	13 211	97 031	35 023	7 659	335 376
	Mar	74 656	45 858	4 088	27 347	42 710	9 780	90 418	26 384	7 558	328 799
	Apr	70 875	33 123	2 609	20 375	42 732	13 499	85 918	28 688	8 079	305 898

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, ejection 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 email, 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 2018 was 86,2%. The collection rate for March 2018 was 86,7%.
Seasonal adjustment	8	Seasonally adjusted estimates of all categories are generated each month, using the X-12 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the US Bureau of the Census, 1968. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences, which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. Therefore the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. The X-12-ARIMA procedure for civil cases for debt is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: Click to download seasonal adjustment for civil cases for debt.
Trend cycle	9	The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-12-ARIMA Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimate the underlying trend cycle.
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.

