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Statistics of civil cases for debt
(Preliminary)

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Juan-Pierre Terblanche
Tel: (012) 310 2965

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Key results for August 2018

Table A – Key figures for the month of August 2018

Actual estimates	August 2018	% change between August 2017 and August 2018	% change between June – August 2017 and June – August 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	47 436	-1,6	-0,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	18 588	-12,0	-9,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	302,3	-20,5	-0,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 0,4% in the three months ended August 2018 compared with the three months ended August 2017.

Negative contributors to the 0,4% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- promissory notes (contributing -2,8 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -0,5 of a percentage point); and
- money lent (contributing -0,1 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 9,8% in the three months ended August 2018 compared with the three months ended August 2017.

The largest negative contributors to the 9,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -4,6 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -2,3 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,6 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,6 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased marginally by 0,1% in the three months ended August 2018 compared with the three months ended August 2017. The largest negative contributor to the 0,1% decrease was money lent (contributing -6,0 percentage points), while 'other' debts (contributing 7,3 percentage points) was the largest positive contributor – see Tables 4 and 5.

There were 18 588 civil judgements for debt in August 2018 amounting to R302,3 million. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R77,3 million or 25,6%);
- services (R69,0 million or 22,8%); and
- 'other' debts (R49,5 million or 16,4%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

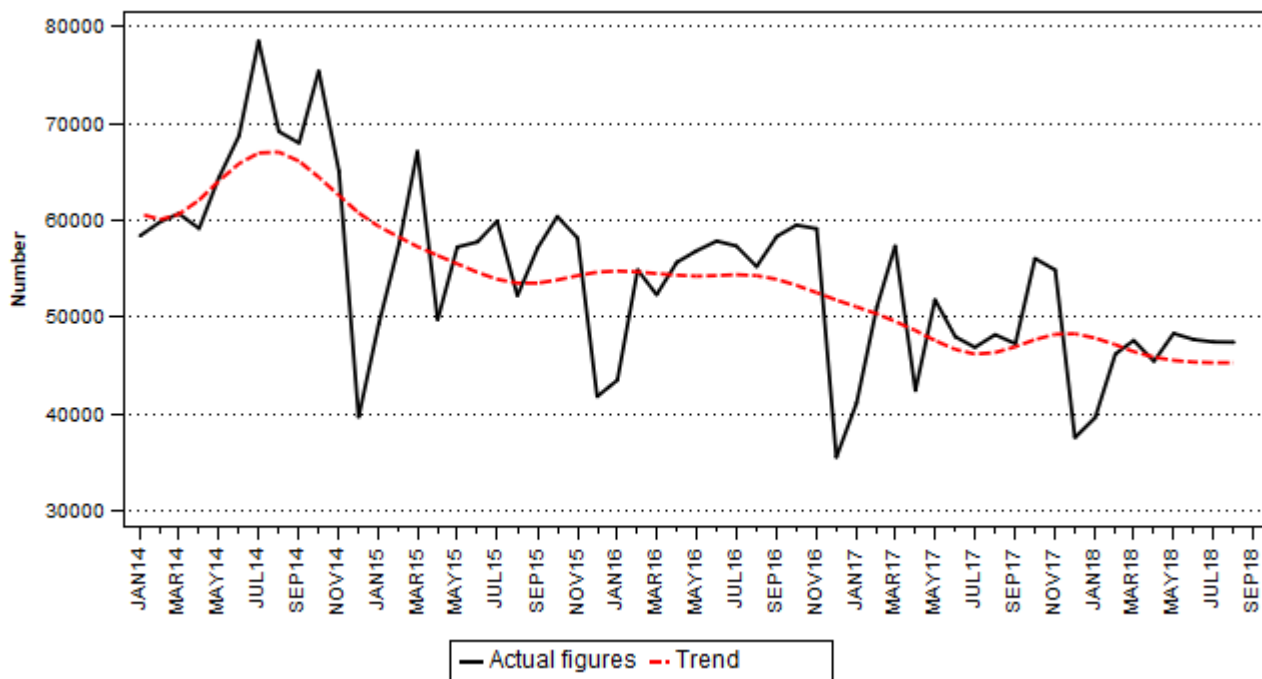
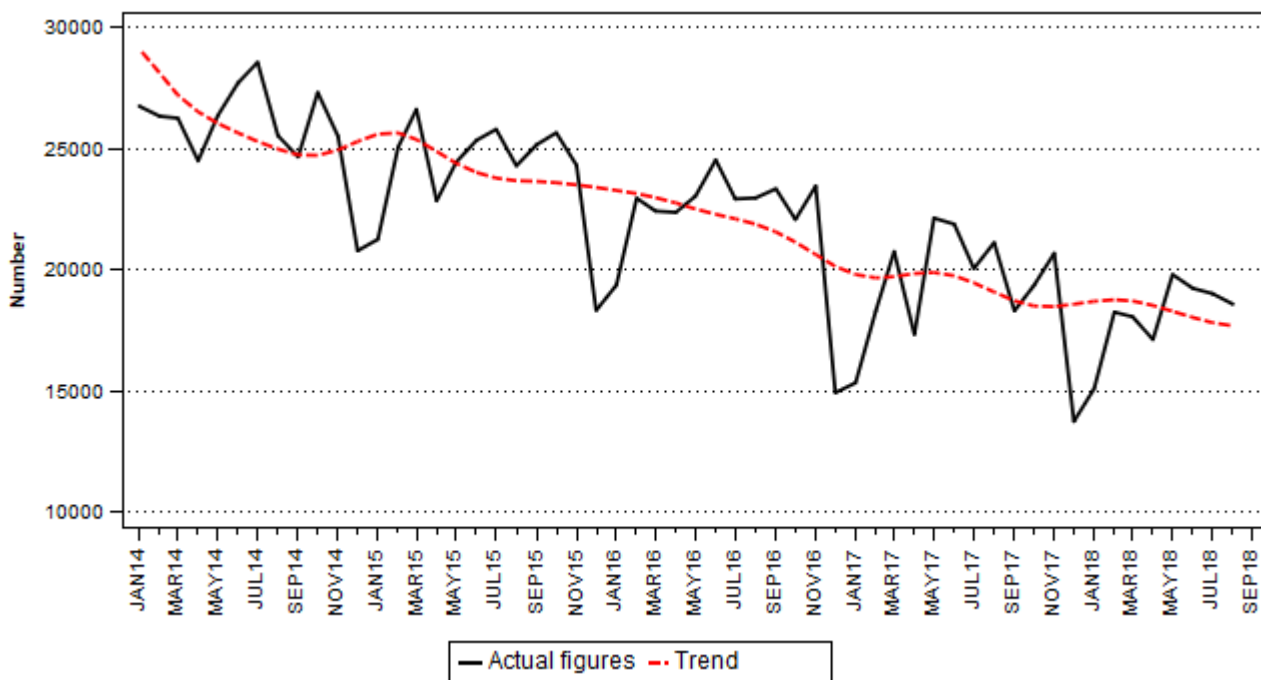


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Aug-17	1/ Jul-18	1/ Aug-18	2017	Aug-17	1/ Jul-18	1/ Aug-18
Cases recorded	Actual figures	639 355	54 264	50 501	51 012	548 538	47 151	43 681	44 182
	Seasonally adjusted		52 064	47 877	48 188		44 785	41 080	41 274
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	34 961	2 963	2 927	2 800	25 426	2 109	2 209	2 026
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	21 233	1 569	1 706	1 863	16 778	1 243	1 343	1 429
	Services - Professional	71 206	6 255	5 852	5 733	62 068	5 390	5 172	5 061
	Services - Other	98 488	8 331	8 167	9 140	83 660	7 110	6 997	7 938
	Rent	31 726	2 753	2 745	2 719	23 540	2 069	2 248	2 128
	Money lent	131 098	10 201	10 368	10 116	123 147	9 474	9 585	9 415
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	82 316	7 354	6 071	5 695	75 454	6 740	5 534	5 224
	Other debts	111 715	8 782	9 622	9 370	98 973	7 828	8 591	8 468
	Total - Actual figures	582 743	48 208	47 458	47 436	509 046	41 963	41 679	41 689
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		46 006	44 720	45 214		40 201	39 147	40 010

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2017	Aug-17	1/ Jul-18	1/ Aug-18	2017	Aug-17	1/ Jul-18	1/ Aug-18
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	14 897	1 283	1 220	1 182	11 296	983	903	906
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	6 829	826	497	641	5 912	742	414	550
	Services - Professional	35 673	3 128	3 146	3 007	32 574	2 920	2 929	2 766
	Services - Other	35 552	3 206	2 918	3 099	31 207	2 855	2 525	2 753
	Rent	18 112	1 844	2 291	1 746	15 155	1 564	1 870	1 503
	Money lent	50 369	4 320	3 567	3 360	46 408	3 956	3 174	2 992
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	25 826	2 415	1 911	2 054	22 218	2 091	1 663	1 800
	Other debts	41 748	4 097	3 468	3 499	38 438	3 832	3 148	3 293
	Total - Actual figures	229 006	21 119	19 018	18 588	203 208	18 943	16 626	16 563
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		19 453	17 945	17 179		17 279	15 728	15 216

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2017	Aug-17	1/ Jul-18	1/ Aug-18	2017	Aug-17	1/ Jul-18	1/ Aug-18
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	243 233	29 105	19 196	20 795	115 847	10 322	9 642	12 941
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	133 486	21 468	10 072	12 675	115 030	17 784	8 775	10 339
	Services - Professional	258 424	21 897	20 721	21 408	229 419	18 768	18 644	19 491
	Services - Other	493 962	48 444	51 620	47 561	405 530	37 227	38 182	37 955
	Rent	351 978	35 890	41 145	28 689	243 565	25 948	35 101	23 176
	Money lent	1 163 947	99 130	83 134	77 349	1 064 361	90 799	72 017	68 226
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	533 411	52 796	47 642	44 273	463 911	48 402	43 276	38 156
	Other debts	770 054	71 272	185 306	49 540	627 839	56 652	48 433	41 196
	Total - Actual figures	3 948 495	380 002	458 836	302 290	3 265 502	305 902	274 070	251 480
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		358 244	418 222	287 549		288 149	257 202	236 684

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 August 2017 and the three months ended August 2018

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2017	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2018	% change between Jun – Aug 2017 and Jun – Aug 2018	Difference between Jun – Aug 2017 and Jun – Aug 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	143 112	142 599	-0,4	-513
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	63 049	56 841	-9,8	-6 208
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 093,6	1 092,7	-0,1	-0,9

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

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 June to August 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 August 2017	Actual estimates August 2018	% change between August 2017 and August 2018	Difference between August 2017 and August 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	48 208	47 436	-1,6	-772
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	21 119	18 588	-12,0	-2 531
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	380,0	302,3	-20,5	-77,7

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	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
	May	8 089	3 981	778	3 198	9 222	2 269	16 442	2 378	1 979	48 336
	Jun	7 016	4 209	763	3 935	8 951	2 141	16 032	2 503	2 155	47 705
	Jul	8 825	3 495	596	3 425	9 351	1 932	15 648	2 228	1 958	47 458
	Aug	8 347	2 949	641	2 938	9 994	1 887	16 618	2 103	1 959	47 436

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	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
	May	3 639	2 405	416	1 823	4 684	741	3 866	1 063	1 167	19 804
	Jun	2 917	2 595	313	2 108	4 591	703	3 774	1 052	1 182	19 235
	Jul	3 382	1 732	263	1 923	4 447	944	4 009	1 188	1 130	19 018
	Aug	2 879	1 637	313	1 968	5 155	890	3 696	817	1 233	18 588

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	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
	May	78 913	40 113	7 774	24 135	58 491	15 277	73 192	23 335	7 438	328 668
	Jun	63 234	41 702	4 215	32 411	51 923	13 953	90 076	27 407	6 669	331 590
	Jul	74 915	34 322	3 959	23 890	41 316	15 472	99 869	157 305	7 788	458 836
	Aug	75 073	33 048	4 018	26 721	48 945	15 458	71 096	18 628	9 303	302 290

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 August 2018 was 85,7%. The improved collection rate for July 2018 was 88,7%.
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.

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Technical enquires

Onica Mushwana Telephone number: (012) 310 4897
Email address: onicama@statssa.gov.za

JP Terblanche Telephone number: (012) 310 2965
Email address: juan-pierret@statssa.gov.za

General enquiries

User information services Telephone number: (012) 310 8600
Email address: info@statssa.gov.za

Postal address Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Produced by Stats SA