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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for January 2015

Table A – Key figures for the month of January 2015

Actual estimates	January 2015	% change between January 2014 and January 2015	% change between Nov 2013 – Jan 2014 and Nov 2014 – Jan 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	49 235	-15,7	-8,3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	21 251	-20,5	-17,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	273,1	-12,7	-11,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 8,3% in the three months ended January 2015 compared with the three months ended January 2014. A 15,7% decrease was recorded between January 2014 and January 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 8,3% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -4,8 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -1,7 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -1,3 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 17,1% in the three months ended January 2015 compared with the three months ended January 2014. A decrease of 20,5% was recorded between January 2014 and January 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 17,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -7,3 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -3,4 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -2,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 11,1% lower in the three months ended January 2015 compared with the three months ended January 2014. A year-on-year decrease of 12,7% was recorded in January 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 11,1% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -4,8 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,6 percentage points);
- services (contributing -1,8 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -1,8 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In January 2015, 21 251 civil judgements for debt amounting to R273,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R78,6 million or 28,8%);
- ‘other’ debts (R60,0 million or 22,0%); and
- services (R52,0 million or 19,0%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

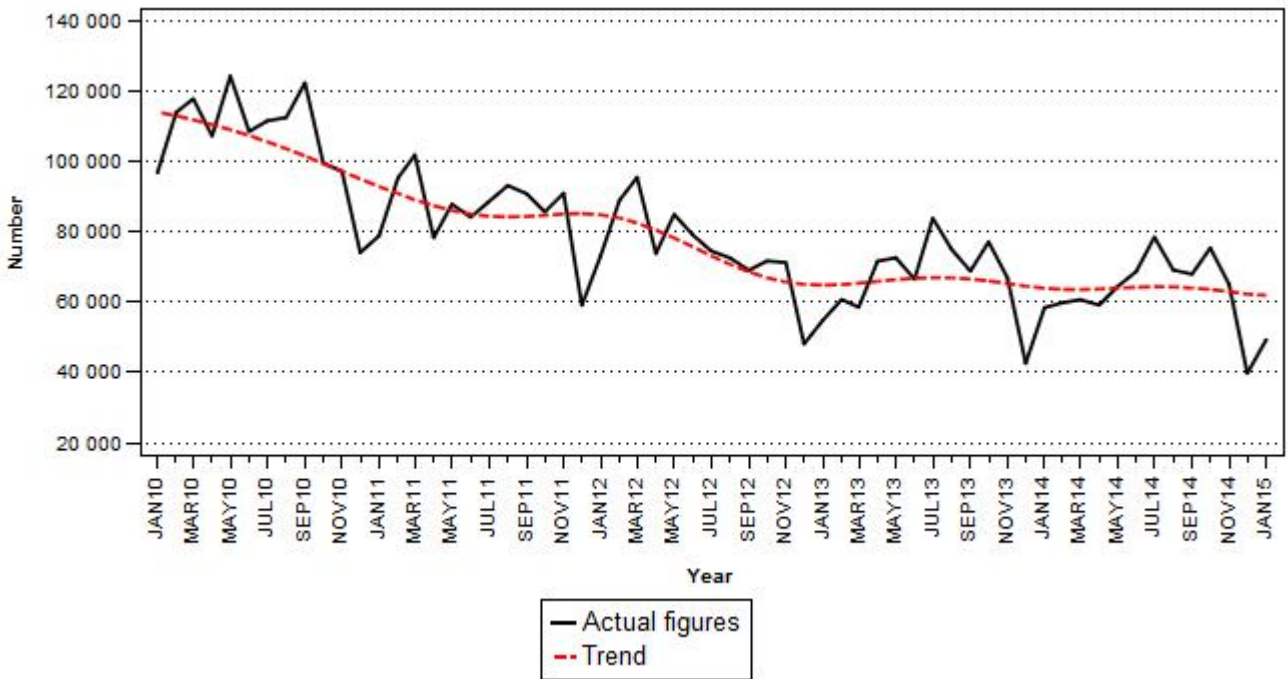
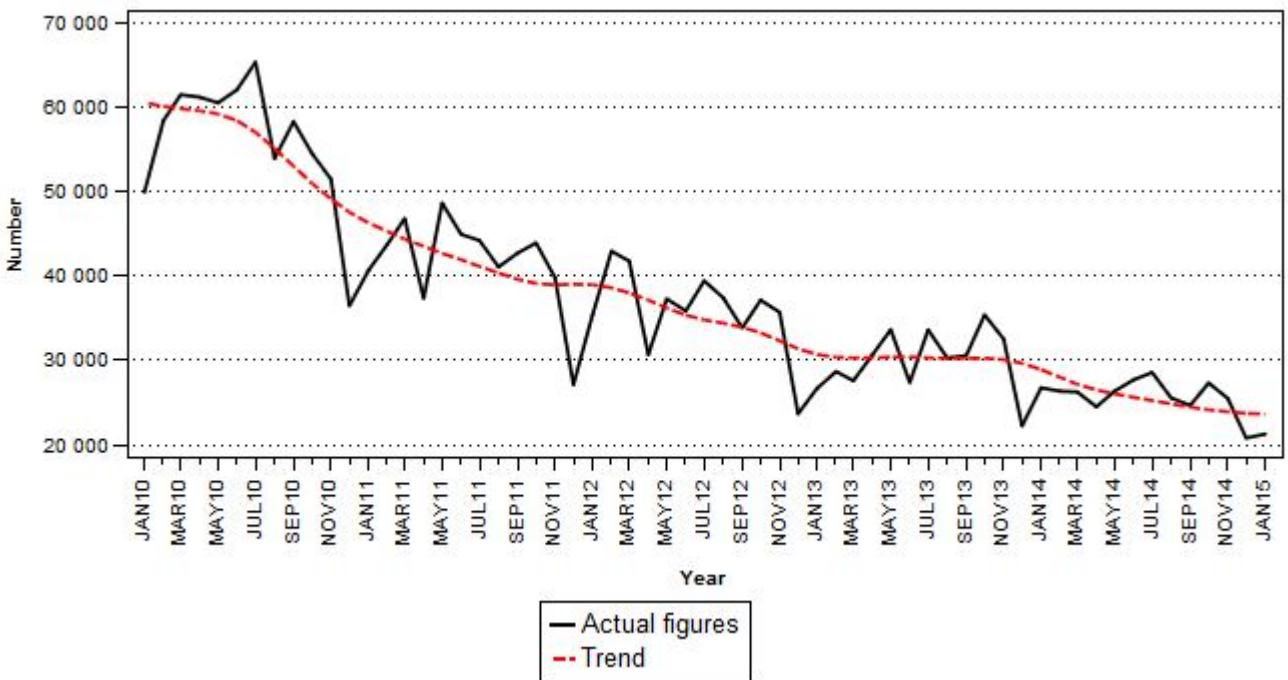


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Jan-14	1/ Dec-14	1/ Jan-15	* 2014	Jan-14	1/ Dec-14	1/ Jan-15
Cases recorded	Actual figures	838 926	64 470	44 884	53 922	738 542	54 866	39 207	44 211
	Seasonally adjusted		79 205	66 313	66 615		64 330	59 414	51 863
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	53 702	4 963	2 829	3 084	41 998	3 610	2 116	2 411
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	26 973	1 902	2 148	1 734	21 678	1 361	1 751	1 336
	Services - Professional	93 548	7 230	4 791	6 225	83 216	6 241	4 239	5 690
	Services - Other	124 116	9 198	6 653	8 268	107 931	7 972	5 609	7 172
	Rent	39 481	3 261	2 510	2 323	32 456	2 597	2 019	1 851
	Money lent	199 369	14 788	9 347	11 759	189 974	13 889	8 938	11 163
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	98 753	8 096	4 535	6 076	91 037	6 846	4 039	5 558
	Other debts	130 908	8 973	6 906	9 766	117 735	8 255	6 190	8 889
	Total - Actual figures	766 850	58 411	39 719	49 235	686 025	50 771	34 901	44 070
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		68 549	58 323	57 895		59 159	53 091	51 482

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		* 2014	Jan-14	1/ Dec-14	1/ Jan-15	* 2014	Jan-14	1/ Dec-14	1/ Jan-15
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	21 883	1 933	1 341	1 515	16 688	1 465	1 006	1 167
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 381	601	577	563	5 580	452	436	418
	Services - Professional	53 262	4 516	3 383	3 485	47 696	3 809	2 935	3 058
	Services - Other	47 316	3 785	3 098	2 662	41 425	3 281	2 746	2 181
	Rent	17 543	1 875	1 174	1 488	14 406	1 594	909	1 108
	Money lent	75 586	7 041	5 171	5 599	70 978	6 326	4 901	5 216
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 335	2 081	2 264	2 268	23 145	1 733	1 995	1 968
	Other debts	59 879	4 908	3 777	3 671	55 630	4 550	3 513	3 363
	Total - Actual figures	310 185	26 740	20 785	21 251	275 548	23 210	18 441	18 479
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		29 786	27 587	23 667		26 164	24 661	20 849

1/ Preliminary.
* Revised.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		* 2014	Jan-14	1/ Dec-14	1/ Jan-15	* 2014	Jan-14	1/ Dec-14	1/ Jan-15
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	289 100	26 718	19 658	19 236	166 780	18 852	12 540	12 025
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	89 599	7 070	6 707	5 857	75 311	5 993	5 268	4 730
	Services - Professional	268 653	23 549	23 033	19 813	234 985	18 145	20 519	17 236
	Services - Other	470 117	34 353	32 375	32 137	375 093	28 327	27 202	22 904
	Rent	277 582	25 461	16 761	18 990	201 587	19 309	10 801	11 558
	Money lent	1 085 532	85 290	81 915	78 574	1 002 428	76 617	79 366	75 444
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	418 697	26 246	36 322	38 439	349 493	22 386	30 390	33 201
	Other debts	1 201 729	84 287	78 481	60 030	779 107	58 485	59 698	47 261
	Total - Actual figures	4 101 009	312 974	295 252	273 076	3 184 784	248 114	245 784	224 359
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		385 495	376 633	339 576		293 544	314 019	268 172

1/ Preliminary.
* Revised.

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

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Nov 2013 – Jan 2014	Actual estimates Nov 2014 – Jan 2015	% change between Nov 2013 – Jan 2014 and Nov 2014 – Jan 2015	Difference between Nov 2013 – Jan 2014 and Nov 2014 – Jan 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	167 888	153 999	-8,3	-13 889
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	81 482	67 538	-17,1	-13 944
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 058,6	940,9	-11,1	-117,7

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 January 2014 and the three months ended January 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	-2,0	-2,0	-2,2
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,3	-0,1	-0,4
Services - Professional	-1,6	-2,3	-0,9
Services - Other	-3,2	-5,0	-0,9
Rent	-1,3	-1,4	-1,8
Money lent	0,0	-3,4	-1,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-0,9	-1,9	1,0
Other debts	0,4	-1,0	-4,8
Total	-8,3	-17,1	-11,1

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 November 2013 to January 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 January 2014	Actual estimates January 2015	% change between January 2014 and January 2015	Difference between January 2014 and January 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	58 411	49 235	-15,7	-9 176
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 740	21 251	-20,5	-5 489
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	313,0	273,1	-12,7	-39,9

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	Jan	8 017	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	58 411
	Feb	8 624	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	59 855
	Mar	9 531	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 677
	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	4 574	836	3 405	8 559	2 831	17 487	2 371	2 032	49 235

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	Jan	4 195	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	26 740
	Feb	4 753	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	26 329
	Mar	4 446	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 247
	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	3 881	3 858	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	2 904	321	2 884	3 409	1 205	4 214	1 661	1 801	21 251

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	Jan	64 948	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	312 974
	Feb	117 750	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 969	402 499
	Mar	74 236	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 188
	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	33 474	37 581	12 314	71 539	28 973	9 362	273 076

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 January 2015 was 84,2%. The improved collection rate for December 2014 was 84,7%.
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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