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Statistics of civil cases for debt
(Preliminary)

January 2018

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Key results for January 2018

Table A – Key figures for the month of January 2018

Actual estimates	January 2018	% change between January 2017 and January 2018	% change between November 2016 – January 2017 and November 2017 – January 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	39 656	-3,7	-2,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	15 099	-1,6	-7,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	268,0	11,3	4,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 2,8% in the three months ended January 2018 compared with the three months ended January 2017.

There were two negative contributions to the 2,8% decrease for civil summonses issued:

- money lent (contributing -4,2 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -1,9 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 7,8% in the three months ended January 2018 compared with the three months ended January 2017.

The largest contributions to the 7,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -5,0 percentage points);
- services (contributing -2,4 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -0,6 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 4,1% in the three months ended January 2018 compared with the three months ended January 2017.

The largest positive contributions to the 4,1% increase were the value of judgements relating to:

- promissory notes (contributing 2,1 percentage points);
- services (contributing 1,9 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing 1,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In January 2018, 15 099 civil judgements for debt amounting to R268,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R71,6 million or 26,7%);
- 'other' debts (R63,9 million or 23,9%); and
- services (R51,4 million or 19,2%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

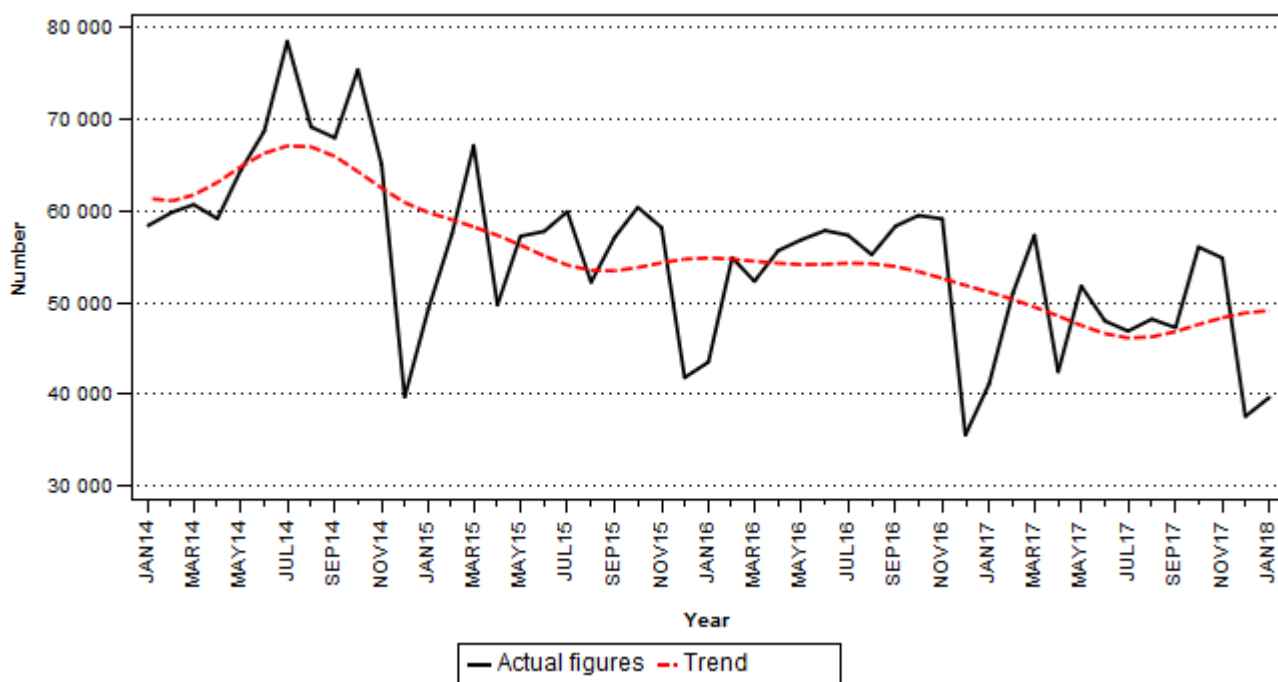
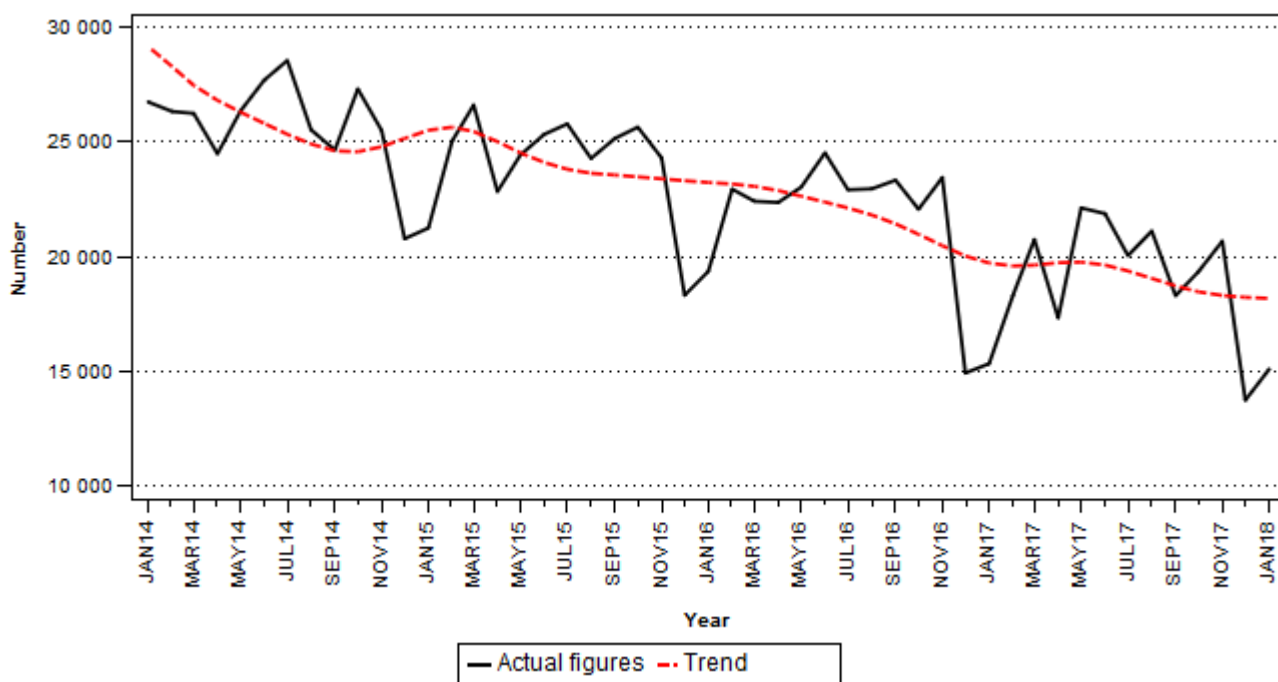


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Jan-17	1/ Dec-17	1/ Jan-18	2017	Jan-17	1/ Dec-17	1/ Jan-18
Cases recorded	Actual figures	639 355	44 564	41 039	42 331	548 538	38 507	35 034	37 239
	Seasonally adjusted		55 136	59 119	51 513		47 464	49 642	45 312
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	34 961	2 364	2 483	2 292	25 426	1 725	1 859	1 672
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	21 233	1 458	1 245	1 489	16 778	1 169	943	1 205
	Services - Professional	71 206	5 028	5 319	5 309	62 068	4 246	4 664	4 663
	Services - Other	98 488	6 642	6 717	7 206	83 660	5 582	5 716	6 170
	Rent	31 726	1 866	2 196	2 106	23 540	1 438	1 679	1 559
	Money lent	131 098	10 458	7 496	8 050	123 147	9 865	6 942	7 255
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	82 316	5 856	4 745	4 954	75 454	5 369	4 332	4 435
	Other debts	111 715	7 490	7 402	8 250	98 973	6 369	6 578	7 332
	Total - Actual figures	582 743	41 162	37 603	39 656	509 046	35 763	32 713	34 291
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		50 031	53 857	48 108		43 524	46 816	42 087

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2017	Jan-17	1/ Dec-17	1/ Jan-18	2017	Jan-17	1/ Dec-17	1/ Jan-18	
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	14 897	941	858	858	11 296	693	603	640
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	6 829	498	381	556	5 912	436	333	502
	Services - Professional	35 673	2 837	2 056	2 608	32 574	2 429	1 732	2 435
	Services - Other	35 552	2 178	2 243	2 015	31 207	1 869	1 965	1 726
	Rent	18 112	995	1 057	1 408	15 155	811	858	1 209
	Money lent	50 369	3 752	2 987	3 017	46 408	3 447	2 667	2 754
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	25 826	1 688	1 860	1 767	22 218	1 455	1 614	1 543
	Other debts	41 748	2 453	2 307	2 870	38 438	2 208	2 099	2 681
	Total - Actual figures	229 006	15 342	13 749	15 099	203 208	13 348	11 871	13 490
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		18 257	18 594	17 910		16 050	16 543	16 198

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2017	Jan-17	1/ Dec-17	1/ Jan-18	2017	Jan-17	1/ Dec-17	1/ Jan-18	
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	243 233	12 492	15 124	13 292	115 847	7 047	7 516	6 454
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	133 486	8 117	8 602	8 838	115 030	7 489	8 082	8 109
	Services - Professional	258 424	18 956	16 099	19 389	229 419	15 819	14 406	17 882
	Services - Other	493 962	28 521	35 374	32 057	405 530	23 468	29 428	25 185
	Rent	351 978	19 513	27 505	26 767	243 565	13 211	22 087	20 942
	Money lent	1 163 947	70 840	82 255	71 642	1 064 361	65 560	75 423	67 417
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	533 411	32 219	39 348	32 112	463 911	27 223	35 924	26 842
	Other debts	770 054	50 146	56 416	63 939	627 839	36 600	45 445	41 618
	Total - Actual figures	3 948 495	240 804	280 723	268 036	3 265 502	196 417	238 311	214 449
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		306 941	355 766	326 365		250 891	305 155	263 059

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 January 2017 and the three months ended January 2018

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Nov 2016 – Jan 2017	Actual estimates Nov 2017 – Jan 2018	% change between Nov 2016 – Jan 2017 and Nov 2017 – Jan 2018	Difference between Nov 2016 – Jan 2017 and Nov 2017 – Jan 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	135 865	132 127	-2,8	-3 738
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	53 726	49 529	-7,8	-4 197
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	863,4	899,1	4,1	35,7

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

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 2016 to January 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 January 2017	Actual estimates January 2018	% change between January 2017 and January 2018	Difference between January 2017 and January 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	41 162	39 656	-3,7	-1 506
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	15 342	15 099	-1,6	-243
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	240,8	268,0	11,3	27,2

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	Jan	6 630	3 224	554	3 356	5 507	2 178	16 203	1 541	1 969	41 162
	Feb	8 707	3 749	811	3 309	8 903	2 185	18 837	2 409	2 136	51 046
	Mar	10 515	4 635	1 040	3 941	8 972	2 538	20 565	2 661	2 479	57 346
	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

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	Jan	2 541	2 201	226	1 657	2 034	659	3 922	1 048	1 054	15 342
	Feb	3 370	2 019	292	1 788	3 843	925	4 211	765	1 099	18 312
	Mar	4 019	2 876	539	2 175	3 577	1 001	3 999	1 265	1 300	20 751
	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

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	Jan	42 093	44 928	3 266	21 097	27 757	9 980	58 734	24 055	8 894	240 804
	Feb	67 812	35 384	3 094	19 788	39 303	14 398	81 496	15 697	6 534	283 506
	Mar	71 623	55 846	6 302	26 937	46 972	12 822	95 561	26 632	13 150	355 845
	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

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 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 January 2018 was 90,1%. The collection rate for December 2017 was 85,7%.
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.

