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Statistics of civil cases for debt
(Preliminary)

July 2018

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Key results for July 2018

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2018

Actual estimates	July 2018	% change between July 2017 and July 2018	% change between May – July 2017 and May – July 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	47 476	1,2	-2,2
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	18 993	-5,3	-9,4
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	459,3	26,3	0,3

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

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

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

- promissory notes (contributing -2,4 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -1,1 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing -0,4 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 9,4% in the three months ended July 2018 compared with the three months ended July 2017.

The largest negative contributors to the 9,4% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -5,4 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,8 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -1,7 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 0,3% in the three months ended July 2018 compared with the three months ended July 2017. The largest positive contributor to the 0,3% increase was 'other' debts (contributing 8,2 percentage points), while money lent (contributing -7,9 percentage points) was the largest negative contributor – see Tables 4 and 5.

There were 18 993 civil judgements for debt in July 2018 amounting to R459,3 million. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- 'other' debts (R185,4 million or 40,4%);
- money lent (R83,7 million or 18,2%); and
- services (R72,2 million or 15,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

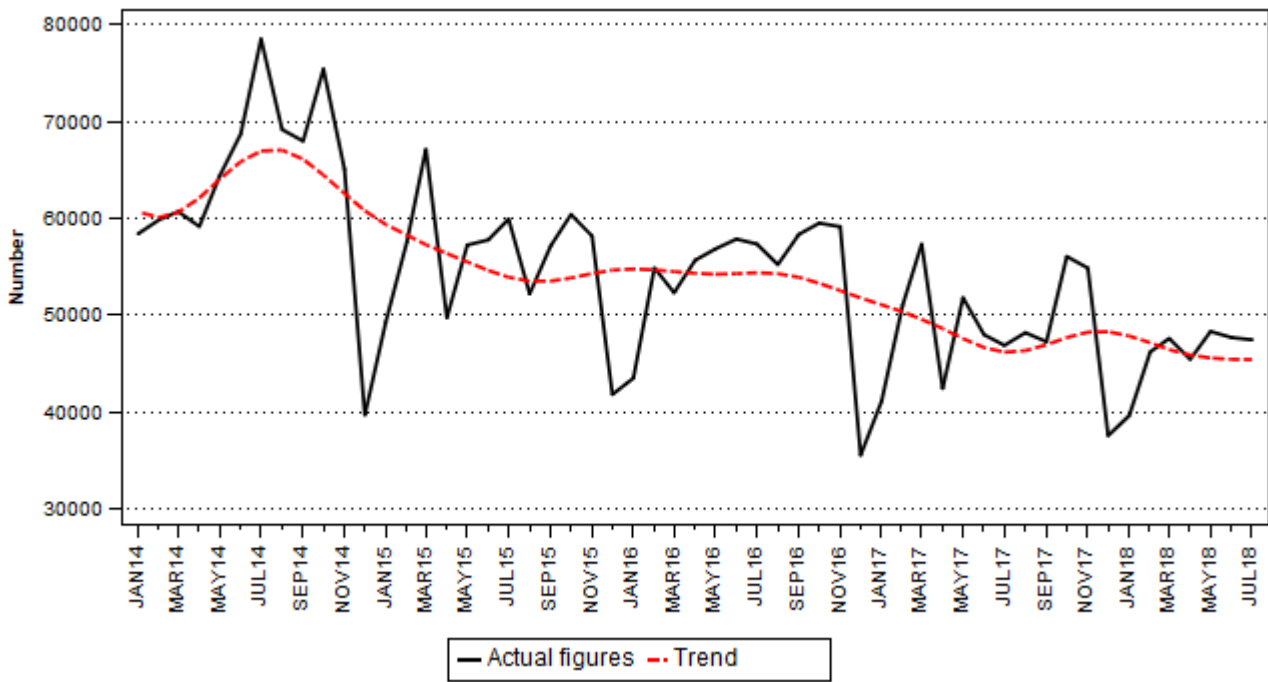
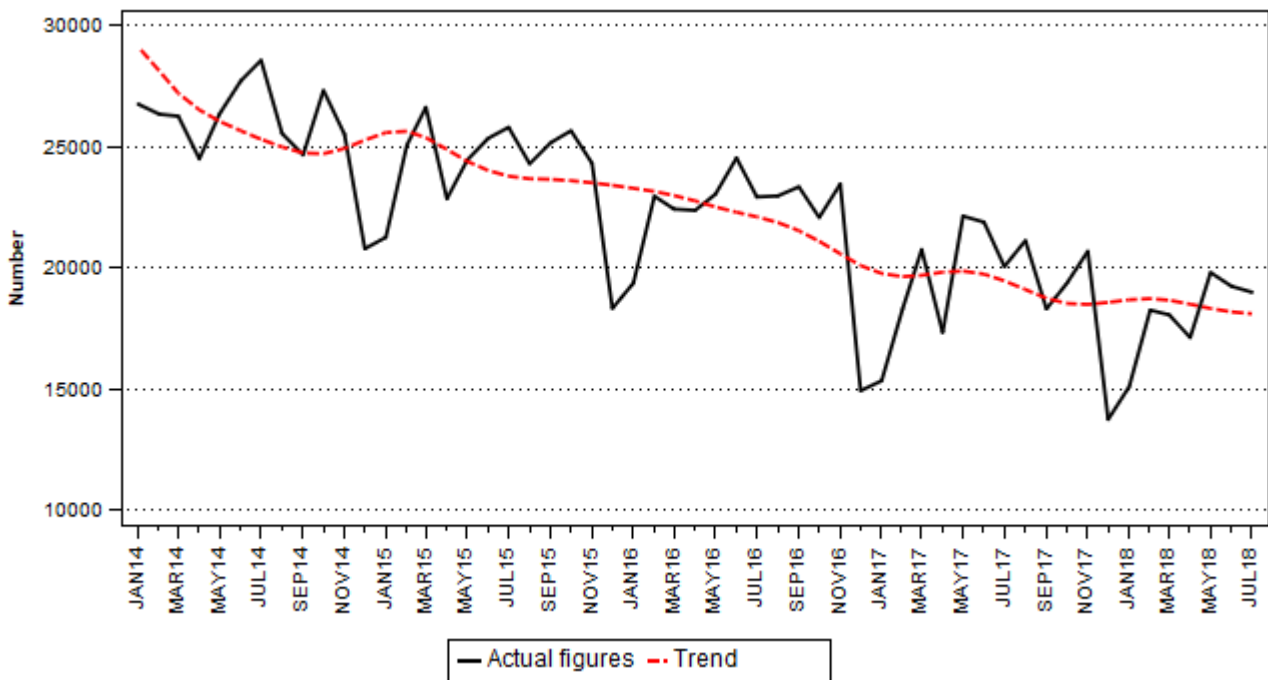


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Jul-17	1/ Jun-18	1/ Jul-18	2017	Jul-17	1/ Jun-18	1/ Jul-18
Cases recorded	Actual figures	639 355	52 831	50 564	50 520	548 538	46 022	44 393	43 701
	Seasonally adjusted		50 892	49 697	47 895		44 106	44 137	41 170
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	34 961	3 072	2 920	2 931	25 426	2 236	2 136	2 212
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	21 233	1 833	1 823	1 706	16 778	1 446	1 389	1 343
	Services - Professional	71 206	5 891	6 222	5 852	62 068	5 192	5 549	5 172
	Services - Other	98 488	7 473	8 771	8 172	83 660	6 337	7 565	7 002
	Rent	31 726	2 644	2 571	2 747	23 540	2 000	2 004	2 250
	Money lent	131 098	10 051	9 985	10 388	123 147	9 482	9 312	9 605
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	82 316	6 981	5 628	6 061	75 454	6 408	5 148	5 525
	Other debts	111 715	8 957	9 785	9 619	98 973	7 927	9 041	8 589
	Total - Actual figures	582 743	46 902	47 705	47 476	509 046	41 028	42 144	41 698
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		45 474	47 230	44 674		39 881	41 927	39 000

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2017	Jul-17	1/ Jun-18	1/ Jul-18	2017	Jul-17	1/ Jun-18	1/ Jul-18	
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	14 897	1 371	1 162	1 220	11 296	1 072	857	903
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	6 829	705	586	497	5 912	626	502	414
	Services - Professional	35 673	3 132	3 218	3 085	32 574	2 886	2 986	2 868
	Services - Other	35 552	3 008	3 203	2 915	31 207	2 674	2 842	2 522
	Rent	18 112	1 538	1 834	2 291	15 155	1 278	1 566	1 870
	Money lent	50 369	4 245	3 719	3 606	46 408	3 950	3 324	3 213
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	25 826	2 386	2 143	1 911	22 218	2 049	1 901	1 663
	Other debts	41 748	3 666	3 370	3 468	38 438	3 401	3 015	3 148
	Total - Actual figures	229 006	20 051	19 235	18 993	203 208	17 936	16 993	16 601
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		19 453	18 292	17 952		17 423	16 053	15 703

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2017	Jul-17	1/ Jun-18	1/ Jul-18	2017	Jul-17	1/ Jun-18	1/ Jul-18	
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	243 233	20 228	21 206	19 201	115 847	9 953	12 180	9 647
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	133 486	13 939	12 652	10 072	115 030	12 729	11 317	8 775
	Services - Professional	258 424	21 111	21 980	20 590	229 419	18 466	19 446	18 513
	Services - Other	493 962	36 708	41 331	51 594	405 530	29 958	34 821	38 156
	Rent	351 978	32 215	36 529	41 145	243 565	24 485	26 742	35 101
	Money lent	1 163 947	107 992	85 075	83 668	1 064 361	94 253	74 785	72 550
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	533 411	54 218	47 439	47 642	463 911	47 261	43 187	43 276
	Other debts	770 054	77 148	65 378	185 378	627 839	63 366	47 182	48 505
	Total - Actual figures	3 948 495	363 559	331 590	459 290	3 265 502	300 471	269 660	274 523
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		340 670	327 751	421 020		288 713	264 656	259 032

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 July 2017 and the three months ended July 2018

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May – July 2017	Actual estimates May – July 2018	% change between May – July 2017 and May – July 2018	Difference between May – July 2017 and May – July 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	146 715	143 517	-2,2	-3 198
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	64 058	58 032	-9,4	-6 026
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 116,5	1 119,5	0,3	3,0

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

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 May to July 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 July 2017	Actual estimates July 2018	% change between July 2017 and July 2018	Difference between July 2017 and July 2018
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	46 902	47 476	1,2	574
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	20 051	18 993	-5,3	-1 058
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	363,6	459,3	26,3	95,7

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	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
	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	3 501	596	3 437	9 351	1 932	15 648	2 228	1 958	47 476

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	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
	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	1 738	263	1 892	4 447	944	4 009	1 188	1 130	18 993

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	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
	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	34 446	3 959	24 220	41 316	15 472	99 869	157 305	7 788	459 290

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 July 2018 was 87,2%. The improved collection rate for June 2018 was 88,2%.
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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