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STATISTICAL RELEASE

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

July 2019

Embargoed until:
19 September 2019
09:00

ENQUIRIES:
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Tel: (012) 310 2965

FORTHCOMING ISSUE:
August 2019

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE:
17 October 2019



Dipalopalo tsa Aforikaborwa • Dipalopalo tsa Afrika Borwa • Ezezibalo zaseNingizimu Afrika • Tshitatistika Afrika Tshipembe • Tinhlayohlayo Afrika-Dzonga
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Key results for July 2019

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2019

Actual estimates	July 2019	% change between July 2018 and July 2019	% change between May – July 2018 and May – July 2019
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	53 528	12,8	1,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	17 961	-5,6	-6,7
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	356,9	-22,2	-9,3

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt increased by 1,5% in the three months ended July 2019 compared with the three months ended July 2018.

The largest positive contributors to the 1,5% increase were money lent (contributing 4,9 percentage points) and promissory notes (contributing 1,1 percentage points), while the largest negative contributor was services (contributing -4,5 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 6,7% in the three months ended July 2019 compared with the three months ended July 2018.

The largest negative contributions to the 6,7% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- promissory notes (contributing -3,1 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -1,7 percentage points);
- rent (contributing -1,5 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,4 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 by 9,3% in the three months ended July 2019 compared with the three months ended July 2018.

The major contributor to the 9,3% decrease was the value of judgements relating to 'other' debts (contributing -12,8 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In July 2019, 17 961 civil judgements for debt amounting to R356,9 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R113,1 million or 31,7%);
- services (R69,3 million or 19,4%); and
- 'other' debts (R56,4 million or 15,8%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

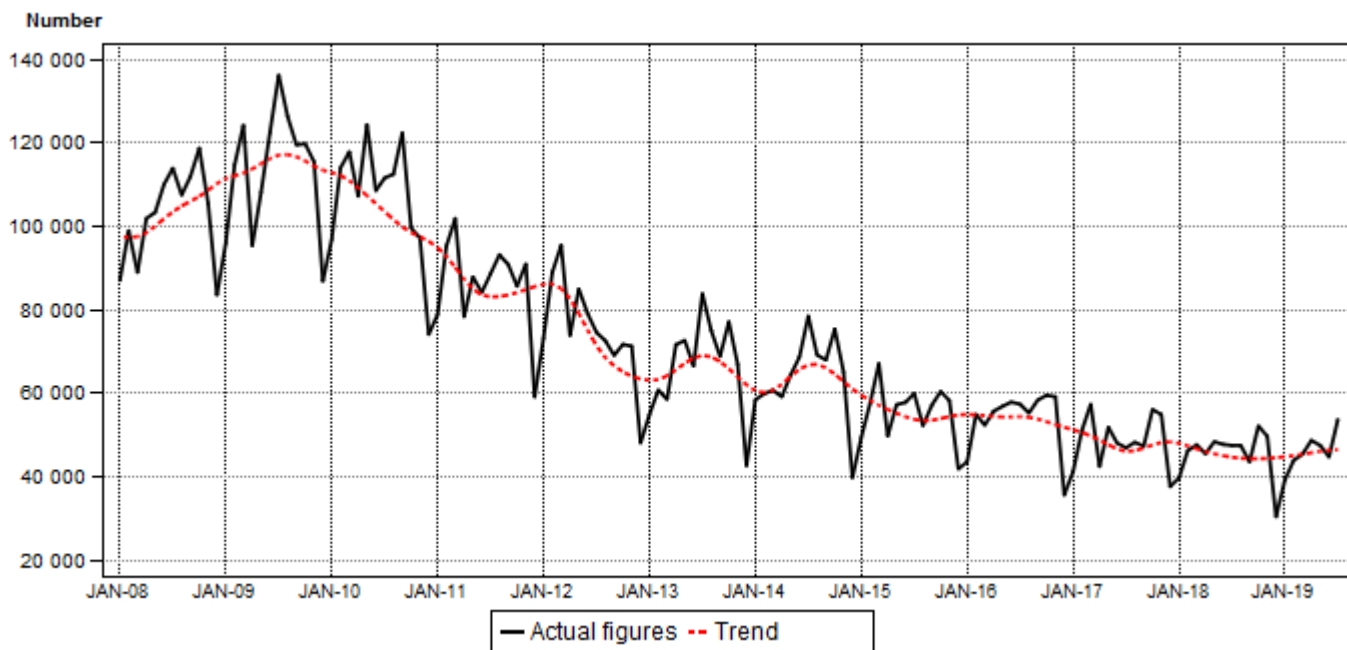
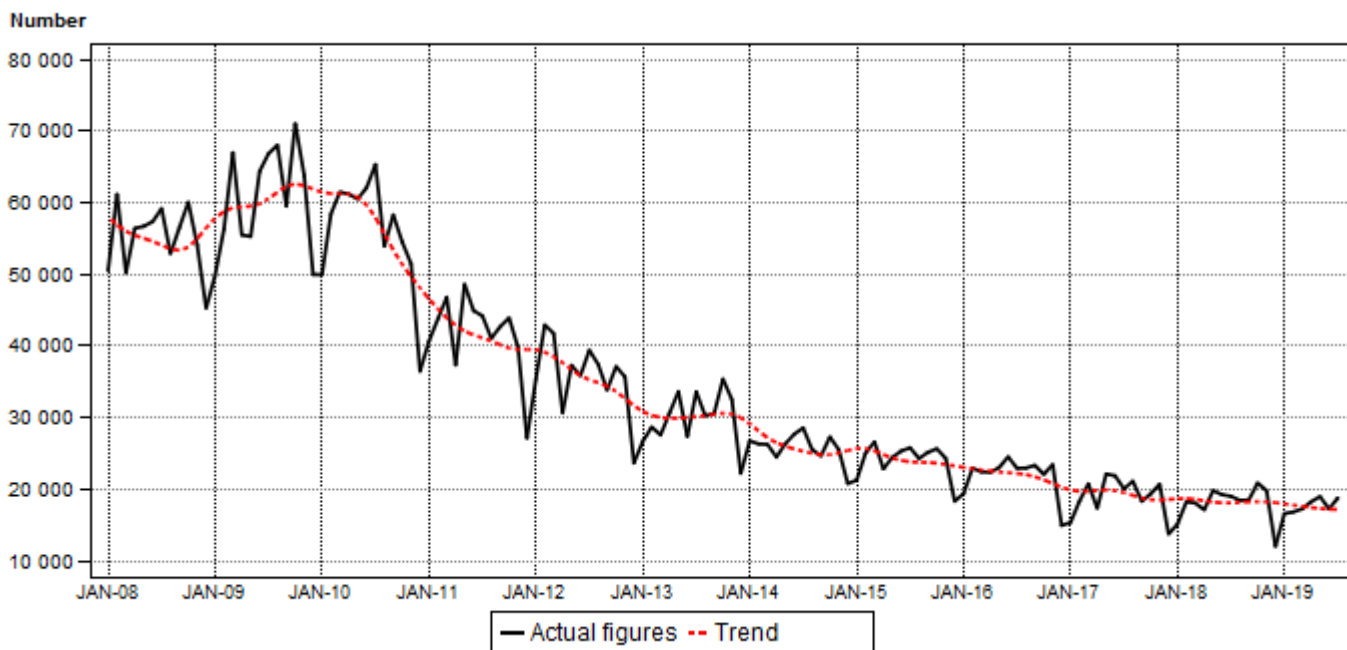


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2018	Jul-18	1/ Jun-19	1/ Jul-19	2018	Jul-18	1/ Jun-19	1/ Jul-19
Cases recorded	Actual figures	585 888	50 501	46 804	55 486	509 164	43 681	41 580	49 544
	Seasonally adjusted		47 067	47 950	50 497		40 226	41 889	44 498
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	31 279	2 927	2 654	3 134	22 591	2 209	2 026	2 483
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	20 557	1 706	1 624	1 688	16 187	1 343	1 474	1 493
	Services - Professional	67 739	5 852	4 690	5 555	59 581	5 172	4 215	5 075
	Services - Other	96 203	8 167	6 730	7 786	81 932	6 997	5 943	6 925
	Rent	30 821	2 745	2 385	2 684	23 384	2 248	1 890	2 103
	Money lent	118 543	10 368	11 903	14 189	110 875	9 585	11 267	13 527
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	69 346	6 071	6 080	7 202	63 588	5 534	5 533	6 845
	Other debts	111 124	9 622	8 647	11 290	100 350	8 591	7 750	10 290
	Total - Actual figures	545 612	47 458	44 713	53 528	478 488	41 679	40 098	48 741
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		43 800	45 983	48 793		38 320	41 031	44 494

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2018	Jul-18	1/ Jun-19	1/ Jul-19	2018	Jul-18	1/ Jun-19	1/ Jul-19	
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	13 668	1 220	1 367	1 420	10 379	903	1 103	1 076
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	6 565	497	493	496	5 647	414	430	434
	Services - Professional	34 194	3 146	2 436	2 713	31 706	2 929	2 230	2 511
	Services - Other	36 404	2 918	3 198	3 134	32 210	2 525	2 975	2 844
	Rent	21 191	2 291	1 751	1 715	17 842	1 870	1 493	1 414
	Money lent	41 492	3 567	3 635	3 735	37 482	3 174	3 273	3 437
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	23 083	1 911	1 501	1 270	20 166	1 663	1 378	1 167
	Other debts	39 576	3 468	2 868	3 478	36 506	3 148	2 612	3 263
	Total - Actual figures	216 173	19 018	17 249	17 961	191 938	16 626	15 494	16 146
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		17 985	16 930	16 721		15 730	15 092	15 021

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2018	Jul-18	1/ Jun-19	1/ Jul-19	2018	Jul-18	1/ Jun-19	1/ Jul-19	
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	219 512	19 196	27 685	23 214	119 583	9 642	20 346	12 504
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	129 657	10 072	10 406	12 436	111 733	8 775	8 897	11 032
	Services - Professional	239 960	20 721	18 472	21 463	215 574	18 644	15 846	18 415
	Services - Other	540 977	51 620	43 309	47 866	440 554	38 182	38 535	38 599
	Rent	373 847	41 145	33 206	37 146	277 365	35 101	25 321	23 892
	Money lent	1 007 514	83 134	82 753	113 091	908 746	72 017	75 270	99 014
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	488 391	47 642	41 727	45 337	430 486	43 276	35 729	40 885
	Other debts	854 056	185 306	58 190	56 372	565 590	48 433	45 566	46 993
	Total - Actual figures	3 853 914	458 836	315 748	356 925	3 069 631	274 070	265 510	291 334
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		414 383	314 448	310 060		253 981	265 768	256 111

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 2018 and the three months ended July 2019

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May – Jul 2018	Actual estimates May – Jul 2019	% change between May – Jul 2018 and May – Jul 2019	Difference between May – Jul 2018 and May – Jul 2019
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	143 499	145 700	1,5	2 201
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	58 057	54 183	-6,7	-3 874
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 119,1	1 014,8	-9,3	-104,3

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 2018 and the three months ended July 2019 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	0,2	0,9
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,2	0,0	-0,2
Services - Professional	-1,6	-2,4	-0,2
Services - Other	-2,9	1,0	0,2
Rent	-0,4	-1,5	-0,4
Money lent	4,9	0,9	3,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	1,1	-3,1	-0,3
Other debts	0,5	-1,7	-12,8
Total	1,5	-6,7	-9,3

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 2018, 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 2018	Actual estimates July 2019	% change between July 2018 and July 2019	Difference between July 2018 and July 2019
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	47 458	53 528	12,8	6 070
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	19 018	17 961	-5,6	-1 057
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	458,8	356,9	-22,2	-101,9

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
2018	Jul	8 825	3 495	596	3 425	9 351	1 932	15 648	2 228	1 958	47 458
	Aug	8 355	2 949	641	2 938	9 994	1 887	16 629	2 103	1 959	47 455
	Sep	7 411	2 731	505	2 720	8 998	1 910	15 325	2 127	1 817	43 544
	Oct	9 406	3 091	933	3 085	11 267	2 320	17 819	2 122	2 082	52 125
	Nov	9 785	3 571	746	3 552	10 539	1 964	15 407	2 114	1 982	49 660
	Dec	4 823	2 053	268	2 304	5 272	1 449	11 487	1 229	1 490	30 375
2019	Jan	6 427	2 464	487	2 846	8 654	1 706	13 032	1 844	1 755	39 215
	Feb	7 570	3 129	568	3 006	8 147	1 925	15 337	2 256	1 942	43 880
	Mar	6 730	3 065	835	3 692	8 503	1 800	16 654	2 061	2 035	45 375
	Apr	7 187	3 186	646	3 022	10 048	2 782	17 253	2 483	2 069	48 676
	May	7 265	3 746	725	3 145	9 303	2 675	16 212	2 432	1 956	47 459
	Jun	7 317	3 754	711	3 274	8 213	2 179	15 139	2 151	1 975	44 713
	Jul	9 252	3 832	774	3 216	10 123	2 662	18 660	2 748	2 261	53 528

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
2018	Jul	3 382	1 732	263	1 923	4 447	944	4 009	1 188	1 130	19 018
	Aug	2 834	1 637	313	1 968	5 155	890	3 597	817	1 233	18 444
	Sep	2 649	1 595	236	1 717	5 055	817	4 282	982	1 150	18 483
	Oct	2 985	1 853	395	2 146	5 748	844	4 477	1 087	1 331	20 866
	Nov	2 894	2 028	329	1 814	6 169	862	3 553	1 023	1 121	19 793
	Dec	2 204	1 184	210	694	2 037	860	3 090	646	1 068	11 993
2019	Jan	2 318	1 599	220	1 480	5 132	779	3 354	617	1 101	16 600
	Feb	2 833	1 651	322	2 463	3 408	869	3 343	758	1 171	16 818
	Mar	2 473	1 280	257	2 216	4 453	683	3 705	1 032	1 148	17 247
	Apr	2 484	1 524	262	2 453	4 987	783	3 761	803	1 183	18 240
	May	3 200	2 127	318	2 361	4 312	943	3 296	1 195	1 221	18 973
	Jun	2 213	1 785	318	3 163	4 324	731	2 739	884	1 092	17 249
	Jul	2 744	1 658	463	1 785	4 910	1 040	2 931	1 217	1 213	17 961

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
2018	Jul	74 915	34 322	3 959	23 890	41 316	15 472	99 869	157 305	7 788	458 836
	Aug	74 691	33 048	4 018	26 721	48 945	15 458	69 193	18 628	9 303	300 005
	Sep	62 469	31 388	2 920	21 812	42 706	14 675	87 495	19 452	8 050	290 967
	Oct	75 849	47 070	4 544	24 783	49 987	15 821	87 495	20 048	10 733	336 330
	Nov	75 507	38 691	3 346	22 775	63 258	13 555	78 520	23 363	5 991	325 006
	Dec	65 384	29 021	3 009	10 129	28 238	16 435	62 417	23 842	5 928	244 403
2019	Jan	61 940	29 612	3 672	17 303	42 169	14 067	83 221	13 616	5 953	271 553
	Feb	67 923	27 286	3 505	29 563	49 874	15 633	63 147	17 402	6 833	281 166
	Mar	52 138	25 605	2 714	20 527	59 093	9 996	86 849	12 763	6 526	276 211
	Apr	63 775	32 847	4 800	31 593	45 766	12 953	83 183	15 976	7 528	298 421
	May	72 314	36 751	3 280	26 065	63 211	15 087	92 893	25 640	6 870	342 111
	Jun	50 371	28 644	4 389	27 475	75 331	15 082	93 955	14 793	5 708	315 748
	Jul	62 252	35 695	4 871	23 859	69 379	20 435	107 556	24 042	8 836	356 925

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 2019 was 84,2%. The collection rate for June 2019 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.

