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**Statistics of civil cases
for debt
May 1998**



Statistical release P0041

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CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS	1
SUMMARY TABLE	1
GRAPHS	
1. Civil summonses issued	3
2. Civil judgements for debt	3
EXPLANATORY NOTES	2
TABLES	
1. Number of civil cases recorded and summonses for debt issued	4
2. Number of civil cases recorded in selected magistrates offices	5
3. Civil default and consent judgement for debt	6
Small claims courts	7

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CIVIL DEBT CASES INCREASE

The total number of civil summonses for debt recorded for the three months up to May 1998 increased by 4,2% after seasonal adjustment compared with the preceding three months, but was 1,1% lower than the corresponding period of a year ago. The total number of civil judgements for debt decreased by 4,2% after seasonal adjustment compared with the previous three months, but was 10,4% higher than the same period of a year ago.

The increase of 4,2% in civil summonses for debt can mainly be attributed to more civil summonses issued in respect of goods sold on open account (+19,0%); "other services" (+37,0%) and money lent (+17,5%). During May 1998, 37 389 or 29,6% of the total summonses for debt issued were for civil summonses relating to "other services", while 21 435 or 17,0% were regarding money lent.

During May 1998, 61 890 civil judgements for debt were issued which involved R460,9 million. The major contributor was civil judgements for debt relating to money lent (R178,3 million), followed by goods sold on open account (R44,4 million) and "other services" (R44,1 million).

Period	Number		Percentage change	
	Summonses for debt	Civil judgements for debt	Summonses for debt	Civil judgements for debt
Actual figures:				
Mar. 1998 - May 1998	393 896	196 507	-1,1	+10,4
Mar. 1997 - May 1997	398 176	177 920		
Seasonally adjusted figures:				
Mar. 1998 - May 1998	390 133	196 835	+4,2	-4,2
Dec. 1997 - Feb. 1998	374 330	205 544		


 PP
 Dr F M Orkin
 Head: Central Statistical Service

ENQUIRIES:

Tel. (012) 310-8095/310-8040
 (012) 310-8351/310-8390
 (012) 310-8109 (technical enquiries)
 Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001
 Fax: 310-8664
 E-mail: info @ css.pwv.gov.za
 Internet: http://www.css.gov.za

NOTES

The particulars refer to all civil cases for debt recorded by Magistrate's Offices.

Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only; i.e. claims for damages, ejectment orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.

Default and consent judgements relate to judgements given in respect of undefended debt cases only.

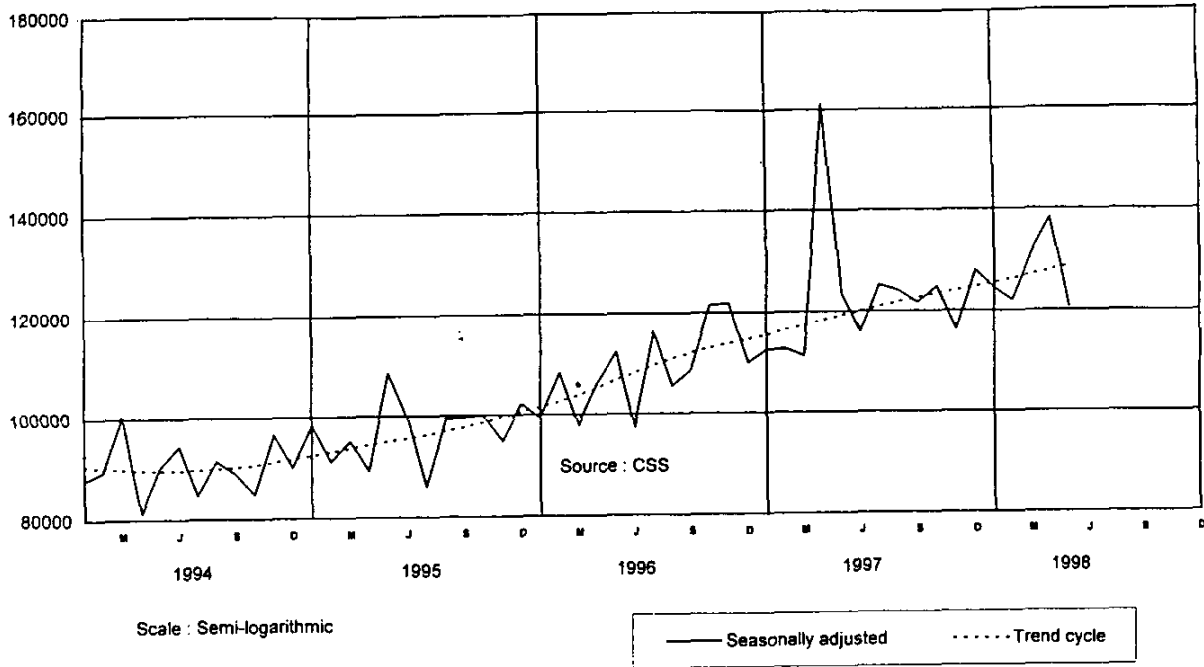
COMPARABILITY

The jurisdiction limit for civil cases handled by Magistrate's Offices (R20 000 for liquid assets and R50 000 for non liquid assets) was increased to R100 000 as from 1 May 1995. A comparison with the period prior to May 1995 must thus be handled with circumspection.

SMALL CLAIMS COURTS

Statistics in respect of small claims courts are updated annually.

CIVIL SUMMONSES ISSUED - NUMBER



CIVIL JUDGEMENTS FOR DEBT - NUMBER

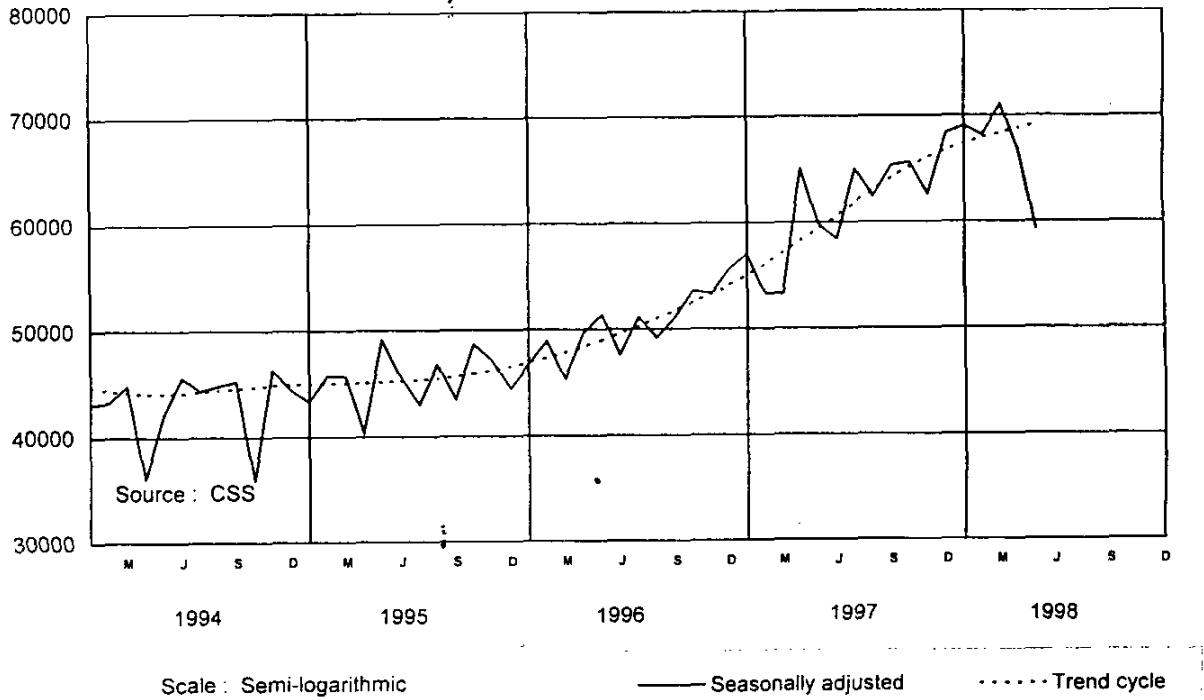


TABLE 1 - NUMBER OF CIVIL CASES RECORDED AND SUMMONSES FOR DEBT ISSUED

Item	Business enterprises and private persons						Private persons									
	1997		1998		1997		1998		1997		1998					
	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May					
1. Cases recorded	1 546	465	134	562	141	059	135	367	1 374	961	121	491	127	797	122	561
1.1 Actual figures	128	268	145	263	129	319					114	551	129	666	115	791
1.2 Seasonally adjusted																
2. Civil summonses for debt	1 476	165	126	196	134	926	128	871	1 316	611	114	299	122	701	117	007
2.1 Total	120	643	138	231	123	554					108	246	124	166	111	065
2.1.1 Actual figures																
2.1.2 Seasonally adjusted																
2.2 Goods sold	260	430	18	282	19	734	21	107	224	674	15	868	16	826	18	179
2.2.1 Open account	43	813	2	591	2	870	3	323	39	060	2	184	2	482	3	001
2.2.2 Instalment sale transactions																
2.3 Services	193	793	15	339	15	163	15	871	181	433	14	315	13	952	15	017
2.3.1 Professional	418	095	37	389	47	824	40	628	381	452	34	039	44	829	37	853
2.3.2 Other																
2.4 Rent	75	350	5	483	5	496	6	284	52	385	4	600	4	497	4	497
2.5 Money lent	213	227	21	435	19	984	17	331	199	886	20	082	18	802	16	553
2.6 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgments of debt	97	731	8	826	8	499	9	188	85	039	7	950	7	629	8	296
2.7 Other	173	726	16	851	15	356	15	139	152	682	15	261	13	684	13	611

TABLE 2 - THE NUMBER OF CIVIL CASES RECORDED IN SELECTED MAGISTRATES OFFICES

Year or Month	Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East- London	Kimberley	Pieter- maritzburg	Durban	Johannes- burg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereenig- ing and Vander- bijlpark	Bloem- fontein
1996	170 524	110 152	18 523	8 717	31 347	80 469	143 379	84 677	31 309	107 156	24 056	25 026
1997	180 497	135 070	19 317	7 862	32 125	104 135	171 300	97 837	36 152	115 062	48 943	19 908
1997 - J	13 055	5 329	1 510	714	2 341	5 205	7 547	5 830	2 723	8 084	1 921	1 237
F	13 515	9 050	1 403	649	2 760	6 369	10 279	6 224	3 173	9 206	2 278	1 401
M	13 504	9 082	1 506	706	2 763	9 675	12 361	6 596	2 963	9 659	1 840	1 137
A	20 656	31 432	1 668	606	2 900	10 135	16 215	9 058	2 563	8 147	2 403	1 552
M	14 672	16 374	1 427	663	2 700	9 121	12 515	11 397	3 052	8 871	5 185	1 240
J	14 992	10 831	1 881	829	2 440	10 430	16 826	8 064	2 898	9 316	3 737	2 630
J	15 765	8 502	1 763	672	3 120	9 304	21 567	9 634	3 596	9 912	4 842	1 380
A	15 543	6 233	1 721	696	2 198	6 281	20 005	11 194	3 410	11 081	6 081	1 663
S	17 160	8 794	1 422	504	2 362	9 336	10 941	7 062	3 279	10 253	3 986	1 663
O	13 845	12 731	1 751	760	3 456	11 399	16 002	7 426	3 087	13 795	8 594	2 344
N	14 830	9 963	1 617	613	2 775	9 444	15 736	8 944	3 081	10 014	6 486	1 912
D	12 960	6 749	1 648	450	2 310	7 436	11 306	6 408	2 317	6 724	1 670	1 302
1998 - J	10 414	7 305	1 749	498	2 946	6 800	11 125	5 585	3 006	8 772	2 271	2 725
F	15 957	7 851	2 117	493	2 073	8 450	10 956	7 383	3 503	8 881	3 374	1 683
M	17 248	10 074	2 290	697	2 663	10 504	11 170	8 489	3 555	10 521	3 190	2 007
A	15 936	14 132	1 880	653	2 250	9 613	18 788	8 841	3 433	9 124	3 085	2 258
M	15 160	13 035	1 946	744	2 270	11 174	10 114	8 444	5 541	9 099	2 373	1 803

TABLE 3 - CIVIL DEFAULT AND CONSENT JUDGEMENTS FOR DEBT

Item	Business enterprises and private persons						Private persons						
	1997		1998		1997		1998		1997		1998		
	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	May	Apr.	
	Number												
1. Judgements													
1.1 Total	736 264	61 890	63 685	62 120	689 927	57 547	58 147	58 069					
1.1.1 Actual figures	59 231	66 570	59 750			54 672	62 045	55 365					
1.1.2 Seasonally adjusted													
1.2 Goods sold	135 496	10 427	11 122	11 727	123 279	9 468	9 909	10 589					
1.2.1 Open account	11 636	1 053	2 285	1 241	10 633	971	1 771	1 185					
1.2.2 Instalment sale transactions													
1.3 Services	92 399	7 586	7 297	8 286	89 600	7 394	7 061	7 996					
1.3.1 Professional	163 725	12 702	12 092	12 548	154 323	11 319	10 813	11 728					
1.3.2 Other													
1.4 Rent	30 302	3 144	2 988	2 306	23 795	2 509	1 890	1 928					
1.5 Money lent	135 704	13 460	13 536	11 092	132 805	13 223	13 304	10 885					
1.6 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	65 918	4 179	4 273	6 019	61 897	3 845	3 909	5 675					
1.7 Other	101 084	9 339	10 092	8 901	93 595	8 818	9 490	8 083					
	R1 000												
1. Judgements													
1.1 Total	5 295 876	460 856	458 503	488 587	4 543 651	392 979	397 943	421 689					
1.2 Goods sold	462 462	44 427	44 237	38 874	301 544	32 002	30 758	23 937					
1.2.1 Open account	254 877	24 839	32 756	19 887	219 404	19 957	30 160	18 170					
1.2.2 Instalment sale transactions													
1.3 Services	130 017	13 764	13 433	11 071	116 976	13 248	12 400	10 123					
1.3.1 Professional	388 655	44 134	34 520	27 503	318 375	38 415	27 789	21 473					
1.3.2 Other													
1.4 Rent	192 252	23 883	16 749	14 760	142 025	20 507	12 462	11 016					
1.5 Money lent	2 325 543	178 329	183 361	229 378	2 185 360	161 929	173 861	218 844					
1.6 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	528 046	40 935	50 845	43 481	466 173	33 687	45 188	38 708					
1.7 Other	1 014 024	90 545	82 602	103 633	793 794	73 234	65 325	79 618					

SMALL CLAIMS COURTS

NOTES

Small claims courts serve as a forum for the adjudication of money claims against individuals or firms. It is for use by the general public only and not for business enterprises.

Up to 30 September 1995 the following actions were excluded from the jurisdiction of small claims courts:

- Claims exceeding R2 000 in value;
- Claims against the state;
- Claims based on cession or the transfer of rights;
- Claims for damages in respect of defamation, malicious prosecution, wrongful imprisonment, wrongful arrest, seduction and breach of promise to marry;
- Claims for the dissolution of a marriage;
- Claims concerning the validity of a will;
- Claims concerning the status of a person in respect of his mental capacity; and
- Claims in which the performance in accordance with a contract is sought, without an alternative claim for payment of damages, except in the case of a claim for rendering an account or transferring movable or immovable property not exceeding R2 000 in value.

As from 1 October 1995 the jurisdiction limit of R2 000 was raised to R3 000.

COMPARABILITY

The information in respect of magistrates courts shown in this statistical release refers to debt cases only and is therefore not strictly comparable with the information shown for the small claims courts.

CONCEPTS

"Courts" relate to the total number of small claims courts at the end of the months as indicated. "Litigants referred" relates to the number of persons (plaintiffs) referred to legal assistants by clerks of the small claims court.

TABLE - SMALL CLAIMS COURTS, LITIGANTS REFERRED, SUMMONSES ISSUED AND HEARINGS

Item	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990
	Number							
Courts	143	120	113	111	109	106	103	92
Litigants referred	13 423	21 230	20 154	20 101	19 502	18 906	16 857	16 474
Summonses issued	25 417	27 463	24 905	25 112	24 929	24 942	19 520	16 551
Hearings	26 622	27 690	25 746	25 356	23 953	23 421	17 814	15 540

Source: Department of Justice