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Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

May 2014

**Embargoed until:
17 July 2014
09:00**

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600

Forthcoming issue

June 2014

Expected release date

21 August 2014

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Key results for May 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2014

Actual estimates	May 2014	% change between May 2013 and May 2014	% change between Mar – May 2013 and Mar – May 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	63 921	-12,0	-9,3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 108	-22,4	-16,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	338,8	-20,1	-16,7

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 9,3% in the three months ended May 2014 compared with the three months ended May 2013. A 12,0% decrease was recorded between May 2013 and May 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 9,3% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- promissory notes (contributing -2,9 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,8 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 16,2% in the three months ended May 2014 compared with the three months ended May 2013. A decrease of 22,4% was recorded year-on-year in May 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 16,2% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -8,4 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,6 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,4 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 16,7% lower in the three months ended May 2014 compared with the three months ended May 2013. A year-on-year decrease of 20,1% was recorded in May 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 16,7% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -5,4 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -4,2 percentage points); and
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -3,9 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In May 2014, 26 108 civil judgements for debt amounting to R338,8 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R96,0 million or 28,3%);
- money lent (R87,1 million or 25,7%); and
- services (R59,9 million or 17,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

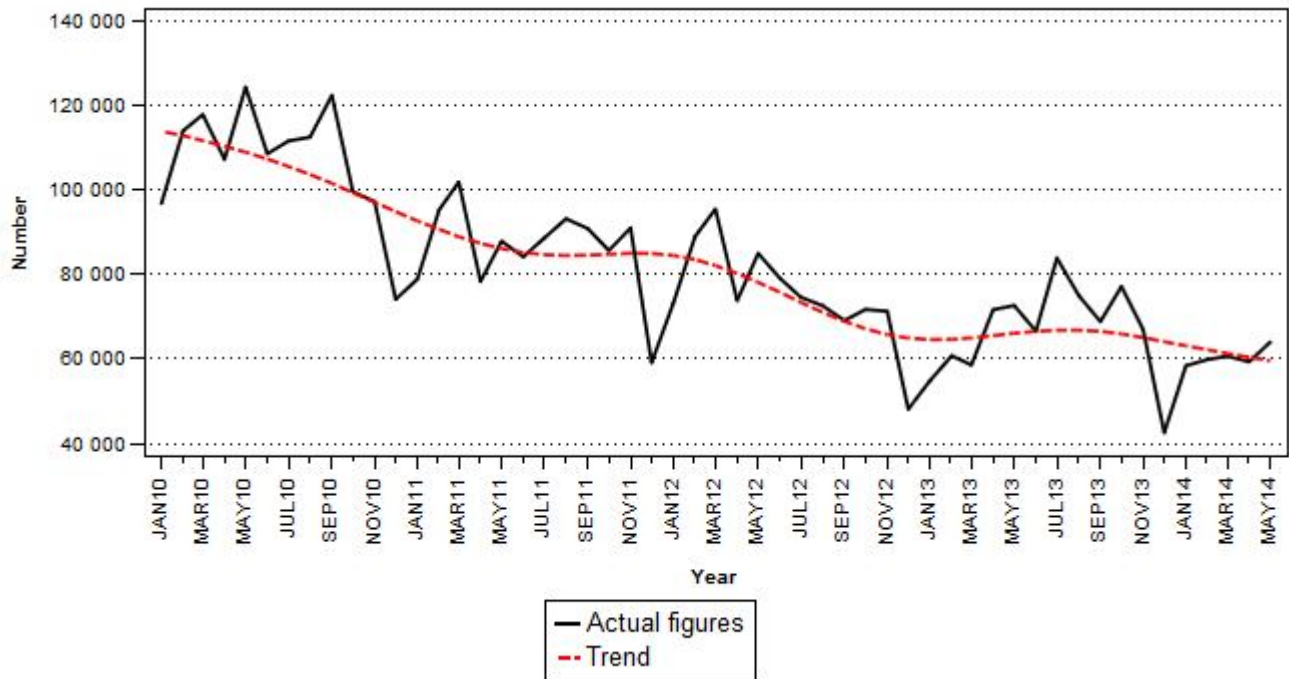
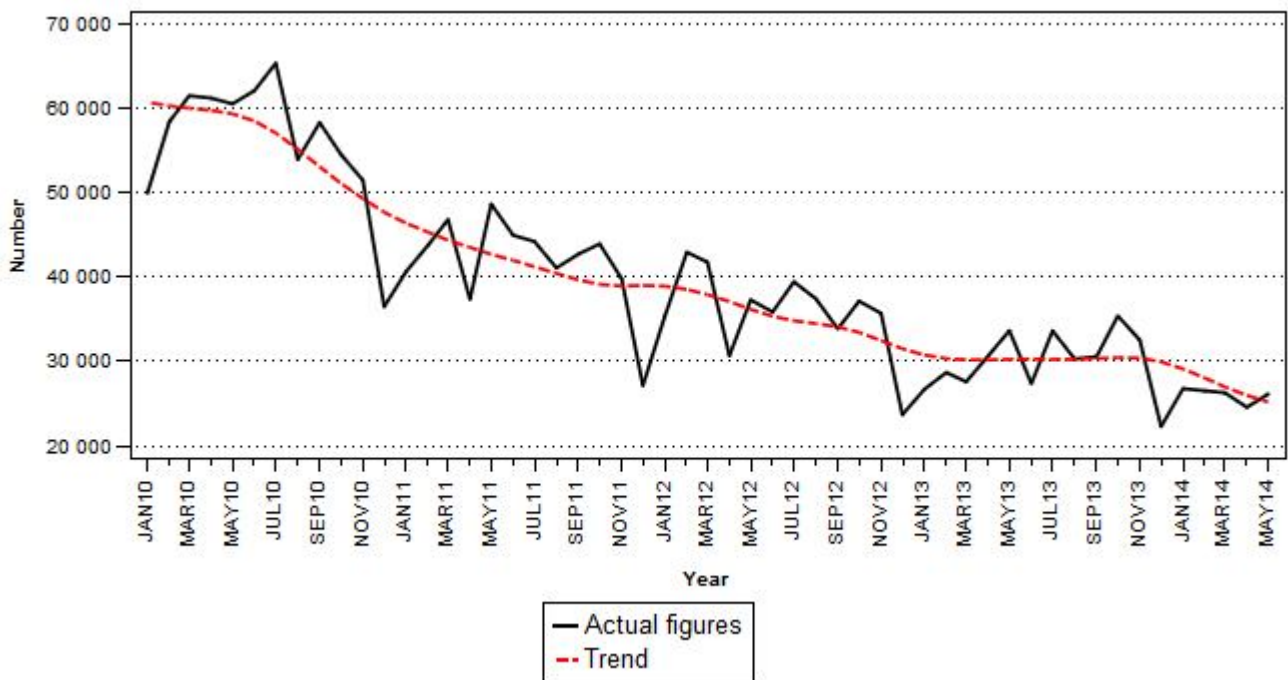


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



**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			
		2013	May-13	1/ Apr-14	1/ May-14	2013	May-13	1/ Apr-14	1/ May-14
Cases recorded	Actual figures	885 749	82 842	65 796	69 769	771 794	71 771	58 594	62 124
	Seasonally adjusted		76 500	68 695	64 384		65 262	60 268	56 539
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	63 952	5 853	4 085	4 317	50 038	4 626	3 237	3 351
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	25 218	2 352	1 804	1 749	19 245	1 761	1 366	1 365
	Services - Professional	101 682	9 077	8 008	7 830	90 677	8 166	7 186	6 982
	Services - Other	136 140	12 013	10 416	10 960	119 179	10 872	9 261	9 563
	Rent	45 440	3 977	2 856	2 824	36 824	3 206	2 215	2 367
	Money lent	189 742	16 403	15 009	15 733	178 122	15 575	14 258	15 065
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	112 450	13 193	7 555	10 346	98 274	11 763	7 035	9 883
	Other debts	124 497	9 765	9 566	10 162	113 694	8 735	8 608	9 352
	Total - Actual figures	799 121	72 633	59 299	63 921	706 053	64 704	53 166	57 928
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		67 425	62 909	59 319		58 652	54 855	52 480

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	May-13	1/ Apr-14	1/ May-14	2013	May-13	1/ Apr-14	1/ May-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	30 597	2 906	1 887	1 879	24 387	2 373	1 439	1 412
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 832	670	549	601	5 973	534	386	440
	Services - Professional	54 998	5 203	4 008	4 292	50 090	4 747	3 637	3 860
	Services - Other	54 712	4 929	3 944	3 954	47 374	4 358	3 482	3 417
	Rent	21 197	1 663	1 467	1 360	17 602	1 365	1 219	1 109
	Money lent	95 683	9 575	5 456	6 217	88 994	9 110	5 166	5 836
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	34 524	3 224	2 462	2 558	29 935	2 825	2 119	2 141
	Other debts	59 606	5 464	4 771	5 247	53 777	5 049	4 411	4 921
	Total - Actual figures	359 149	33 634	24 544	26 108	318 132	30 361	21 859	23 136
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		31 488	26 857	24 447		28 361	22 380	21 579

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	May-13	1/ Apr-14	1/ May-14	2013	May-13	1/ Apr-14	1/ May-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	363 467	35 382	20 614	28 924	210 195	20 583	12 143	12 229
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	122 821	11 321	6 983	6 464	99 484	10 087	5 851	4 555
	Services - Professional	278 838	24 845	18 920	20 920	235 212	21 271	16 422	18 753
	Services - Other	591 004	53 964	36 736	38 964	472 529	44 465	28 948	32 961
	Rent	349 318	28 043	19 395	24 196	242 204	19 478	13 107	18 179
	Money lent	1 207 193	122 215	74 978	87 111	1 088 550	114 961	67 877	82 501
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 317	53 924	38 238	36 142	363 640	43 833	29 656	30 143
	Other debts	1 412 608	94 052	79 325	96 034	785 061	58 496	55 738	72 741
	Total - Actual figures	4 768 566	423 746	295 189	338 755	3 496 875	333 174	229 742	272 062
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		404 239	353 708	321 372		306 633	273 515	249 102

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended May 2013 and the three months ended May 2014

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Mar – May 2013	Actual estimates Mar – May 2014	% change between Mar – May 2013 and Mar – May 2014	Difference between Mar – May 2013 and Mar – May 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	202 788	183 841	-9,3	-18 947
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	91 839	76 922	-16,2	-14 917
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 219,7	1 015,5	-16,7	-204,2

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended May 2013 and the three months ended May 2014 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	-2,3	-2,4	-1,8
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,5	-0,2	-1,2
Services - Professional	-1,6	-1,5	-0,3
Services - Other	-0,5	-0,9	-5,1
Rent	-0,5	-0,6	-1,0
Money lent	-1,5	-8,4	-4,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,9	-0,6	0,7
Other debts	0,5	-1,5	-3,9
Total	-9,3	-16,2	-16,7

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total during March to May 2013, 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, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May 2013	Actual estimates May 2014	% change between May 2013 and May 2014	Difference between May 2013 and May 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	72 633	63 921	-12,0	-8 712
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	33 634	26 108	-22,4	-7 526
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	423,7	338,8	-20,1	-84,9

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2013	May	11 008	6 336	1 508	4 309	10 208	3 362	28 971	4 163	2 768	72 633
	June	10 023	6 081	1 253	3 993	11 152	2 897	24 611	4 307	2 217	66 534
	July	10 855	7 397	1 512	4 265	11 718	3 260	35 868	6 361	2 630	83 866
	August	11 334	6 537	1 295	4 240	11 335	3 020	29 758	5 026	2 470	75 015
	September	9 595	6 688	1 202	4 026	9 322	3 477	28 280	4 053	2 181	68 824
	October	12 020	8 394	1 316	4 504	9 834	5 022	29 364	4 314	2 367	77 135
	November	10 440	9 898	1 341	3 661	8 806	4 012	22 530	3 632	2 567	66 887
December	5 511	3 662	769	2 781	7 129	3 127	14 984	2 037	2 510	42 510	
2014	January	7 966	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	58 360
	February	8 607	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	59 838
	March	9 475	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 621
	April	9 252	5 239	1 658	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	59 299
	May	9 760	6 898	1 405	4 042	8 066	3 089	25 278	3 193	2 190	63 921

Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2013	May	5 724	3 522	993	3 511	4 437	1 795	9 066	2 457	2 129	33 634
	June	4 730	3 033	806	2 969	4 722	1 578	5 453	2 127	1 947	27 365
	July	6 207	3 773	932	3 925	4 191	1 951	6 911	3 327	2 399	33 616
	August	5 295	3 685	714	3 140	4 026	1 805	6 548	2 847	2 216	30 276
	September	5 517	3 181	636	3 087	4 363	2 205	6 821	2 680	2 060	30 550
	October	6 934	4 688	787	3 761	4 852	2 049	8 480	1 668	2 162	35 381
	November	6 940	4 953	895	3 018	3 454	1 935	7 327	1 877	2 119	32 518
	December	3 136	3 049	454	1 976	2 834	1 708	6 076	1 096	1 928	22 257
2014	January	4 216	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	26 761
	February	4 927	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	26 503
	March	4 469	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 270
	April	4 062	2 877	754	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	24 544
	May	4 095	3 714	637	2 585	3 534	1 161	6 519	1 907	1 956	26 108

Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2013	May	74 791	41 251	8 012	45 892	42 781	21 925	132 074	45 942	11 078	423 746
	June	98 333	33 353	9 398	25 685	47 257	20 047	90 254	27 175	8 106	359 608
	July	105 792	41 710	12 998	36 692	41 288	22 732	93 671	49 235	19 740	423 858
	August	122 733	40 579	8 300	28 319	38 692	23 111	119 218	56 016	8 938	445 906
	September	105 675	39 566	5 937	30 535	44 384	16 935	111 888	38 798	8 567	402 285
	October	111 222	53 381	8 146	35 366	49 516	20 792	125 777	34 525	11 810	450 535
	November	127 932	53 314	8 770	34 547	31 398	25 062	103 849	44 688	9 879	439 439
	December	56 826	33 514	4 047	19 776	39 281	17 039	98 680	25 380	12 177	306 720
2014	January	65 434	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	313 460
	February	118 946	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 968	403 694
	March	74 595	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 547
	April	75 403	37 097	9 347	22 227	30 140	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	295 189
	May	72 011	43 830	4 392	22 356	34 940	11 295	95 198	45 389	9 344	338 755

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 May 2014 was 84,2%. The improved collection rate for April 2014 was 88,2%.
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. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
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 debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and salaries, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect of television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat 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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General enquiries

Telephone number: (012) 310 4897/ 2965 (technical queries)
(012) 310 8600 (user information services)
(012) 310 8358 (orders/subscription services)

Fax number: (012) 310 8664 (technical enquiries)

email: onicama@statssa.gov.za (technical enquiries)
info@statssa.gov.za (user information services)
magdaj@statssa.gov.za (orders/subscription services)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

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