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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for May 2019

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2019

Actual estimates	May 2019	% change between May 2018 and May 2019	% change between March – May 2018 and March – May 2019
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	47 360	-2,0	0,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	18 973	-4,2	-1,0
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	342,1	4,1	-4,8

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt was flat in the three months ended May 2019 compared with the three months ended May 2018. There was a decrease of 2,0% in May 2019 compared with May 2018.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 1,0% in the three months ended May 2019 compared with the three months ended May 2018.

The largest negative contributor to the 1,0% decrease was 'other' debts (contributing -1,6 percentage points), while the largest positive contributor was money lent (contributing 1,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

There was a 4,2% decrease in May 2019 compared with May 2018.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 4,8% in the three months ended May 2019 compared with the three months ended May 2018.

The major contributor to the 4,8% decrease was the value of judgements relating to 'other' debts (contributing -5,2 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

There was a 4,1% increase in May 2019 compared with May 2018.

In May 2019, 18 973 civil judgements for debt amounting to R342,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R104,0 million or 30,4%);
- services (R75,6 million or 22,1%); and
- 'other' debts (R53,7 million or 15,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

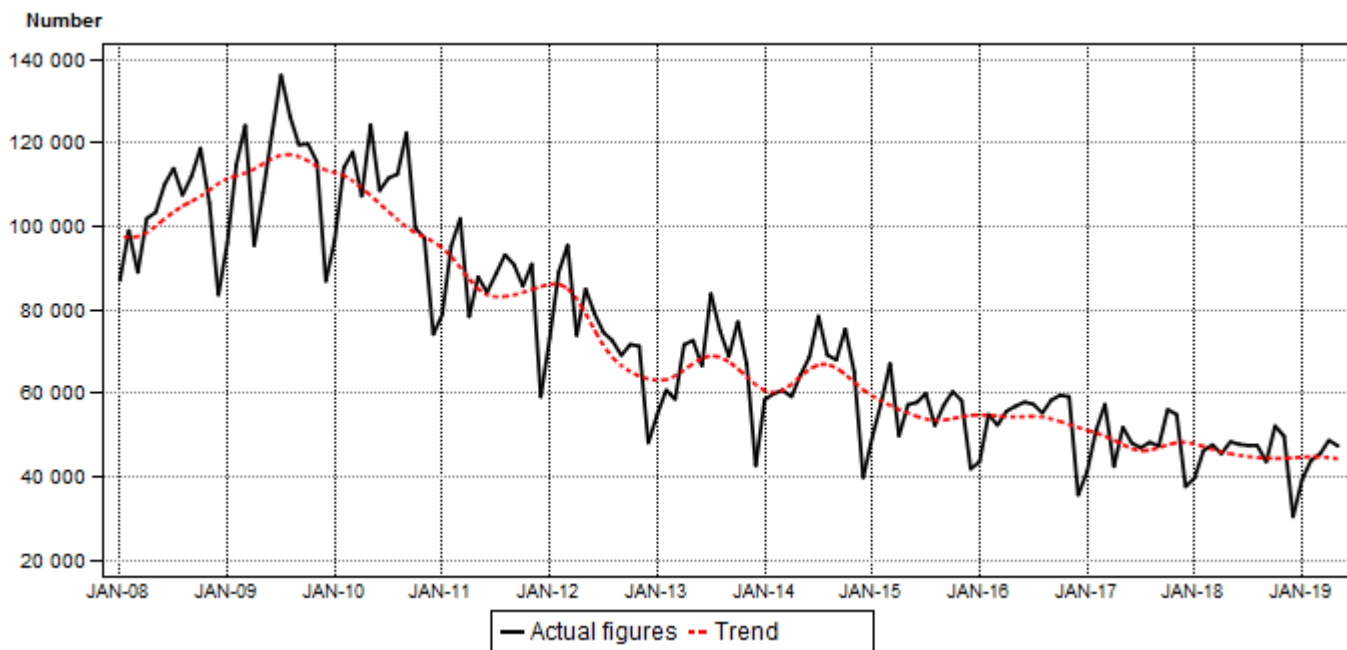
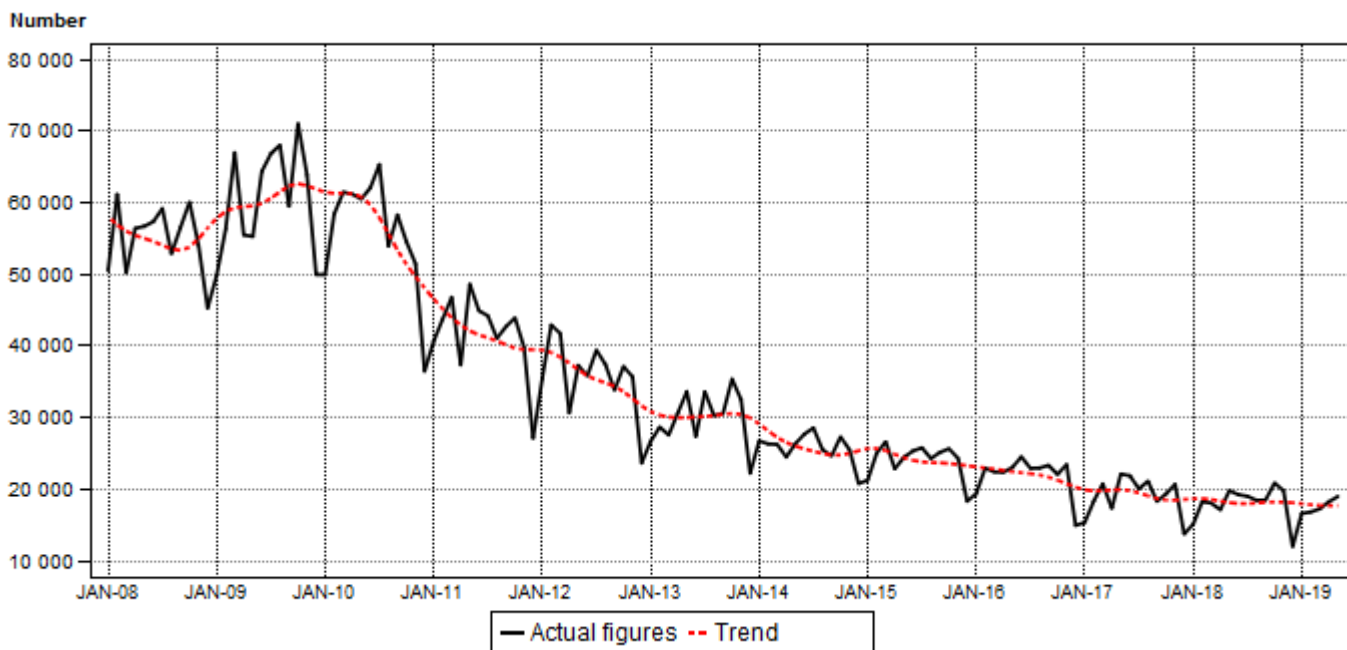


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2018	May-18	1/ Apr-19	1/ May-19	2018	May-18	1/ Apr-19	1/ May-19
Cases recorded	Actual figures	585 888	51 296	50 088	49 325	509 164	44 382	43 577	42 096
	Seasonally adjusted		48 734	54 381	46 423		42 554	47 453	39 934
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	31 279	2 558	3 157	2 837	22 591	1 825	2 297	2 114
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	20 557	1 720	1 532	1 585	16 187	1 359	1 143	1 353
	Services - Professional	67 739	5 957	5 563	5 495	59 581	5 087	4 840	4 803
	Services - Other	96 203	8 179	7 653	6 394	81 932	6 759	6 243	5 642
	Rent	30 821	2 576	2 858	2 290	23 384	1 944	2 234	1 797
	Money lent	118 543	11 000	12 004	12 467	110 875	10 247	11 258	11 704
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	69 346	5 906	6 508	5 873	63 588	5 517	6 047	5 478
	Other debts	111 124	10 440	9 401	10 419	100 350	9 537	8 415	9 411
	Total - Actual figures	545 612	48 336	48 676	47 360	478 488	42 275	42 477	42 302
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		44 922	52 404	44 148		39 138	45 926	39 336

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2018	May-18	1/ Apr-19	1/ May-19	2018	May-18	1/ Apr-19	1/ May-19	
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	13 668	1 362	1 288	1 094	10 379	1 070	1 012	803
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	6 565	613	642	698	5 647	535	558	639
	Services - Professional	34 194	3 138	2 588	2 947	31 706	2 894	2 375	2 749
	Services - Other	36 404	3 570	3 082	3 953	32 210	3 192	2 737	3 700
	Rent	21 191	1 919	1 503	1 705	17 842	1 618	1 139	1 449
	Money lent	41 492	3 662	3 636	4 078	37 482	3 318	3 266	3 792
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	23 083	1 826	2 054	1 306	20 166	1 567	1 808	1 196
	Other debts	39 576	3 714	3 447	3 192	36 506	3 399	3 238	2 881
	Total - Actual figures	216 173	19 804	18 240	18 973	191 938	17 593	16 133	17 209
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		17 841	19 529	17 284		15 640	17 733	15 554

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Total				Private Persons				
	2018	May-18	1/ Apr-19	1/ May-19	2018	May-18	1/ Apr-19	1/ May-19	
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	219 512	22 017	20 736	21 249	119 583	11 933	12 606	10 918
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	129 657	15 020	13 047	12 620	111 733	12 235	11 103	11 236
	Services - Professional	239 960	20 590	16 064	20 858	215 574	18 260	13 456	18 947
	Services - Other	540 977	50 698	49 609	54 789	440 554	44 735	40 116	47 632
	Rent	373 847	29 208	31 715	31 781	277 365	22 647	19 424	20 849
	Money lent	1 007 514	91 819	82 933	103 999	908 746	83 706	72 277	96 980
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	488 391	38 749	33 907	43 133	430 486	33 384	28 472	39 092
	Other debts	854 056	60 567	50 410	53 682	565 590	47 771	44 476	41 526
	Total - Actual figures	3 853 914	328 668	298 421	342 111	3 069 631	274 671	241 930	287 180
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		303 345	330 409	319 750		245 295	264 859	257 597

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 May 2018 and the three months ended May 2019

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Mar – May 2018	Actual estimates Mar – May 2019	% change between Mar – May 2018 and Mar – May 2019	Difference between Mar – May 2018 and Mar – May 2019
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	141 414	141 411	0,0	-3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	54 988	54 460	-1,0	-528
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	963,4	916,7	-4,8	-46,7

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

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 March to May 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 May 2018	Actual estimates May 2019	% change between May 2018 and May 2019	Difference between May 2018 and May 2019
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	48 336	47 360	-2,0	-976
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	19 804	18 973	-4,2	-831
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	328,7	342,1	4,1	13,4

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	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	3 495	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	2 576	16 212	2 432	1 956	47 360

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	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	1 732	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

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	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	34 322	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

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 May 2019 was 85,2%. The collection rate for April 2019 was 86,2%.
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.

