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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for November 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of November 2014

Actual estimates	November 2014	% change between November 2013 and November 2014	% change between Sep – Nov 2013 and Sep – Nov 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	65 066	-2,7	-2,1
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	25 534	-21,5	-21,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	382,2	-13,0	-15,5

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 2,1% in the three months ended November 2014 compared with the three months ended November 2013. A 2,7% decrease was recorded between November 2013 and November 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 2,1% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -4,6 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,0 percentage point); and
- rent (contributing -0,7 of a percentage point) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 21,3% in the three months ended November 2014 compared with the three months ended November 2013. A decrease of 21,5% was recorded year-on-year in November 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 21,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,4 percentage points);
- services (contributing -6,0 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -4,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 15,5% lower in the three months ended November 2014 compared with the three months ended November 2013. A year-on-year decrease of 13,0% was recorded in November 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 15,5% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -5,5 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -3,1 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -2,5 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In November 2014, 25 534 civil judgements for debt amounting to R382,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R126,5 million or 33,1%);
- money lent (R104,8 million or 27,4%); and
- services (R69,4 million or 18,2%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

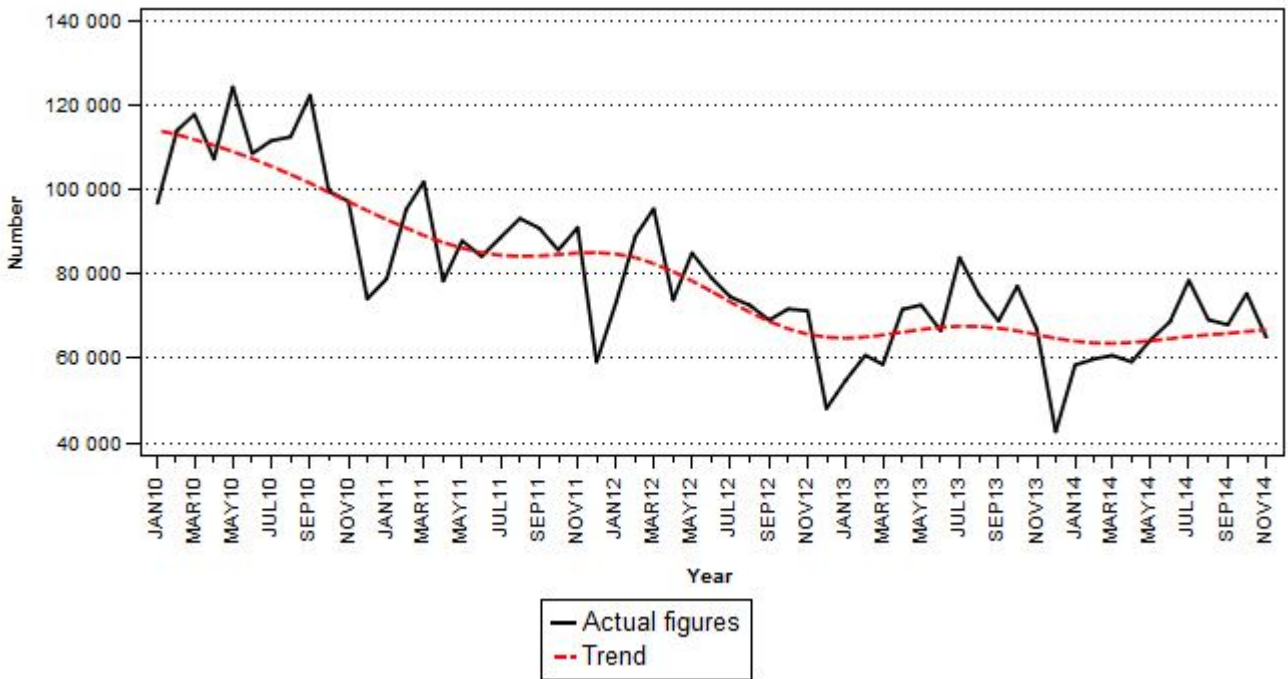
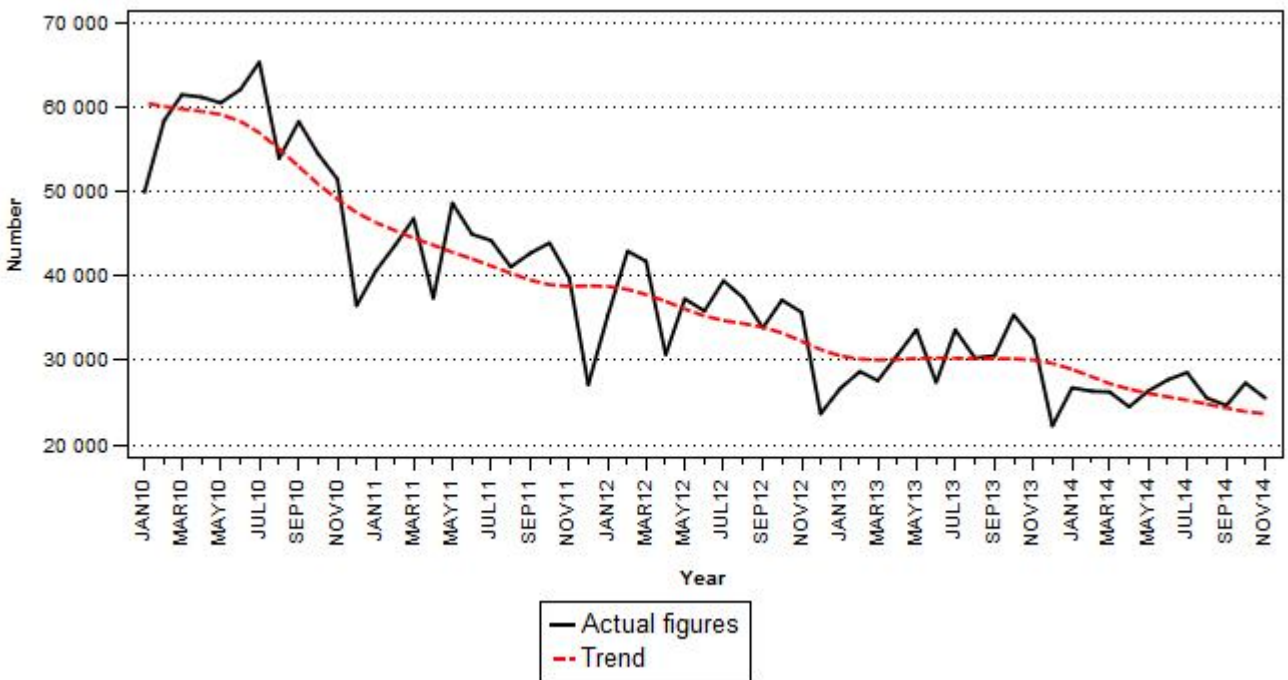


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Nov-13	1/ Oct-14	1/ Nov-14	2013	Nov-13	1/ Oct-14	1/ Nov-14
Cases recorded	Actual figures	885 940	73 144	83 866	71 265	771 916	62 161	75 445	61 594
	Seasonally adjusted		71 568	76 065	69 830		61 459	71 227	61 143
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	63 965	6 003	4 987	5 494	50 057	4 679	4 108	4 479
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	25 222	2 698	3 291	3 174	19 255	2 095	2 865	2 618
	Services - Professional	101 634	9 335	9 543	8 727	90 642	7 899	8 647	7 797
	Services - Other	136 153	13 441	11 723	9 533	119 189	11 923	10 220	8 194
	Rent	45 468	4 524	4 252	3 707	36 855	3 824	3 777	3 114
	Money lent	189 748	14 216	19 543	16 840	178 114	13 322	18 413	15 979
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	112 485	5 938	8 245	6 648	98 296	4 903	7 637	5 939
	Other debts	124 526	10 732	13 797	10 943	113 714	9 678	12 472	9 668
	Total - Actual figures	799 201	66 887	75 381	65 066	706 122	58 323	68 139	57 788
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		64 704	68 269	63 036		57 554	63 117	57 103

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Nov-13	1/ Oct-14	1/ Nov-14	2013	Nov-13	1/ Oct-14	1/ Nov-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	30 599	2 323	1 794	1 547	24 389	1 789	1 370	1 169
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 822	651	708	647	5 965	463	548	497
	Services - Professional	54 963	5 107	5 051	4 340	50 053	4 469	4 558	3 903
	Services - Other	54 737	5 701	3 896	3 786	47 396	5 188	3 440	3 292
	Rent	21 214	1 932	1 187	1 300	17 623	1 643	893	1 069
	Money lent	95 676	8 024	6 425	6 425	88 991	7 484	6 031	6 095
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	34 509	3 987	2 256	2 148	29 923	3 446	1 845	1 809
	Other debts	59 596	4 793	5 993	5 341	53 770	4 281	5 555	4 990
	Total - Actual figures	359 116	32 518	27 310	25 534	318 110	28 763	24 240	22 824
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		30 152	23 846	23 557		26 754	21 248	21 121

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Nov-13	1/ Oct-14	1/ Nov-14	2013	Nov-13	1/ Oct-14	1/ Nov-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	363 472	36 328	25 559	20 278	210 209	26 634	14 673	11 468
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	122 663	10 004	8 484	7 917	99 411	8 441	7 193	6 944
	Services - Professional	278 762	27 309	23 875	22 975	235 197	22 689	21 276	21 162
	Services - Other	591 013	45 943	45 594	46 441	472 533	39 650	38 734	36 030
	Rent	349 342	29 915	21 657	20 429	242 224	22 960	12 382	16 980
	Money lent	1 207 161	111 607	96 561	104 758	1 088 548	100 154	91 830	99 928
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 275	40 634	34 738	32 921	363 598	34 503	27 065	27 591
	Other debts	1 412 365	137 699	120 496	126 459	785 059	63 597	70 422	71 073
	Total - Actual figures	4 768 053	439 439	376 964	382 178	3 496 779	318 628	283 575	291 176
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		408 613	335 603	353 606		291 809	254 257	265 113

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

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Sep – Nov 2013	Actual estimates Sep – Nov 2014	% change between Sep – Nov 2013 and Sep – Nov 2014	Difference between Sep – Nov 2013 and Sep – Nov 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	212 846	208 396	-2,1	-4 450
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	98 449	77 497	-21,3	-20 952
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 292,3	1 092,6	-15,5	-199,7

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 November 2013 and the three months ended November 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	-0,9	-2,7	-1,7
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	1,0	-0,1	-0,8
Services - Professional	-1,5	-0,9	-0,4
Services - Other	-3,1	-5,1	-0,5
Rent	-0,7	-2,0	-2,1
Money lent	2,4	-6,4	-3,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,0	-4,1	-1,3
Other debts	1,8	0,0	-5,5
Total	-2,1	-21,3	-15,5

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 September to November 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 and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates November 2013	Actual estimates November 2014	% change between November 2013 and November 2014	Difference between November 2013 and November 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	66 887	65 066	-2,7	-1 821
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	32 518	25 534	-21,5	-6 984
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	439,4	382,2	-13,0	-57,2

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	Nov	10 440	9 898	1 341	3 661	8 806	4 012	22 530	3 632	2 567	66 887
	Dec	5 591	3 662	769	2 781	7 129	3 127	14 984	2 037	2 510	42 590
2014	Jan	8 017	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	58 411
	Feb	8 624	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	59 855
	Mar	9 531	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 677
	Apr	9 252	5 239	1 507	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	59 148
	May	9 760	6 894	1 445	4 044	8 469	3 089	25 278	3 193	2 190	64 362
	Jun	13 090	5 587	1 276	4 254	9 564	3 357	25 994	3 107	2 456	68 685
	Jul	12 853	6 730	1 505	4 864	10 610	3 691	32 249	3 514	2 462	78 478
	Aug	8 714	6 089	1 282	3 903	10 645	3 754	28 346	3 988	2 419	69 140
	Sep	12 079	5 130	976	4 000	10 359	3 230	26 895	3 052	2 228	67 949
	Oct 1/	11 293	6 285	1 250	5 372	11 448	4 725	29 319	3 402	2 287	75 381
	Nov 1/	9 635	5 420	845	4 071	9 974	3 968	25 024	3 739	2 390	65 066

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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	Nov	6 940	4 953	895	3 018	3 454	1 935	7 327	1 877	2 119	32 518
	Dec	3 103	3 049	454	1 976	2 834	1 708	6 076	1 096	1 928	22 224
2014	Jan	4 195	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	26 740
	Feb	4 753	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	26 329
	Mar	4 446	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 247
	Apr	4 062	2 877	697	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	24 487
	May	4 095	3 686	812	2 586	3 629	1 161	6 519	1 907	1 956	26 351
	Jun	5 315	4 102	766	3 401	3 595	1 518	5 413	1 628	1 960	27 698
	Jul	5 529	3 913	631	3 607	3 685	1 515	5 884	1 743	2 044	28 551
	Aug	4 491	3 117	721	2 783	3 699	1 281	6 266	1 228	1 946	25 532
	Sep	4 662	2 946	684	2 342	4 051	1 300	5 535	1 368	1 765	24 653
	Oct 1/	4 828	3 861	691	3 413	3 795	1 815	5 578	1 572	1 757	27 310
	Nov 1/	3 913	3 858	509	2 925	3 669	1 440	5 915	1 497	1 808	25 534

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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	Nov	127 932	53 314	8 770	34 547	31 398	25 062	103 849	44 688	9 879	439 439
	Dec	56 313	33 514	4 047	19 776	39 281	17 039	98 680	25 380	12 177	306 207
2014	Jan	64 948	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	312 974
	Feb	117 751	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 968	402 499
	Mar	74 236	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 188
	Apr	75 403	37 097	6 648	22 227	30 140	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	292 490
	May	72 011	43 019	9 208	22 471	36 772	11 295	95 198	45 389	9 344	344 707
	Jun	91 053	43 723	5 073	32 985	34 968	12 856	72 497	21 943	12 050	327 148
	Jul	84 131	52 402	4 934	33 840	34 975	14 670	79 929	33 696	11 747	350 324
	Aug	56 977	41 055	5 043	27 985	38 151	14 280	97 007	19 280	11 649	311 427
	Sep	68 262	47 878	6 171	37 095	36 823	12 234	83 259	33 117	8 587	333 426
	Oct 1/	73 833	41 426	8 712	48 906	43 394	20 149	87 208	44 660	8 676	376 964
	Nov 1/	81 761	62 822	4 067	40 578	38 954	15 472	91 607	38 341	8 576	382 178

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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 November 2014 was 82,8%. The improved collection rate for October 2014 was 86,2%.
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.
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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