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Statistics of civil cases for debt
(Preliminary)

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Key results for November 2017

Table A – Key figures for the month of November 2017

Actual estimates	November 2017	% change between November 2016 and November 2017	% change between September – November 2016 and September – November 2017
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	54 899	-7,1	-10,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	20 687	-11,8	-15,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	352,0	-5,0	-5,2

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 10,6% in the three months ended November 2017 compared with the three months ended November 2016.

The largest contributors to the 10,6% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,2 percentage points);
- services (contributing -2,9 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -2,1 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 15,3% in the three months ended November 2017 compared with the three months ended November 2016.

The largest negative contributors to the 15,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -8,2 percentage points);
- services (contributing -3,9 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -2,3 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 5,2% in the three months ended November 2017 compared with the three months ended November 2016.

The largest negative contributors to the 5,2% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- 'other' debts (contributing -4,7 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing -4,5 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The total number of civil judgements for debt granted in November 2017 was 20 687 amounting to R352,0 million. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R85,8 million or 24,4%);
- services (R80,6 million or 22,9%); and
- 'other' debts (R64,5 million or 18,3%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

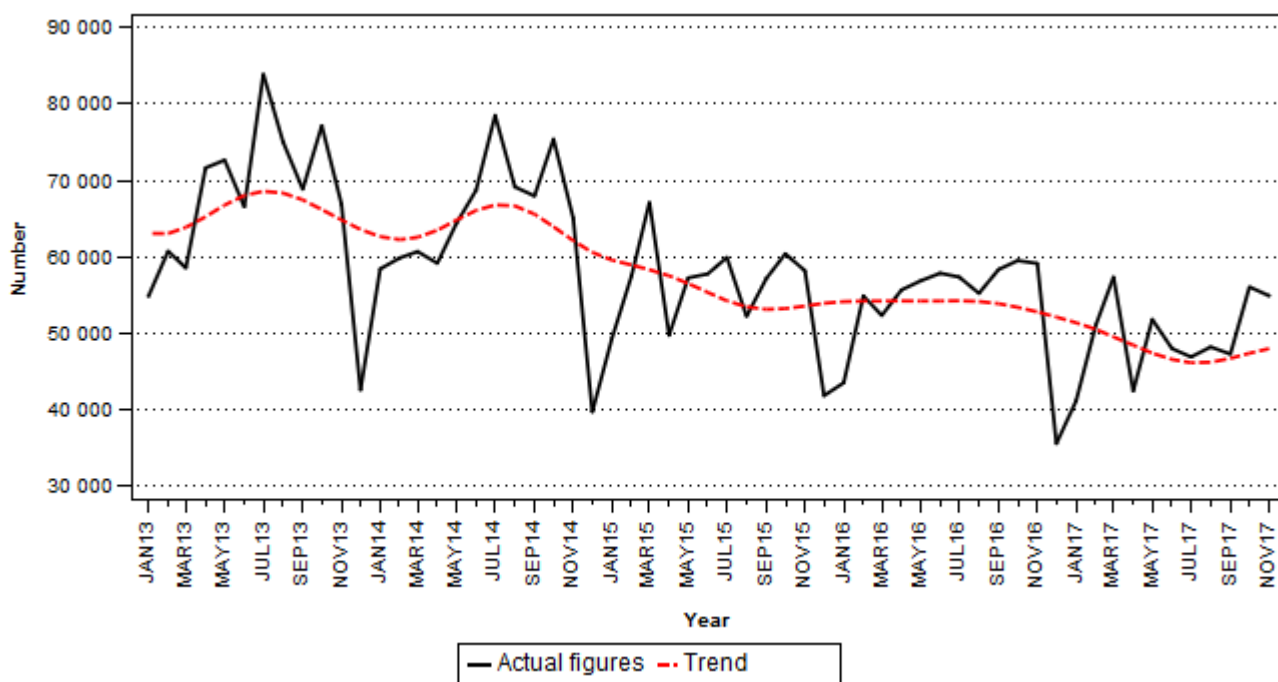
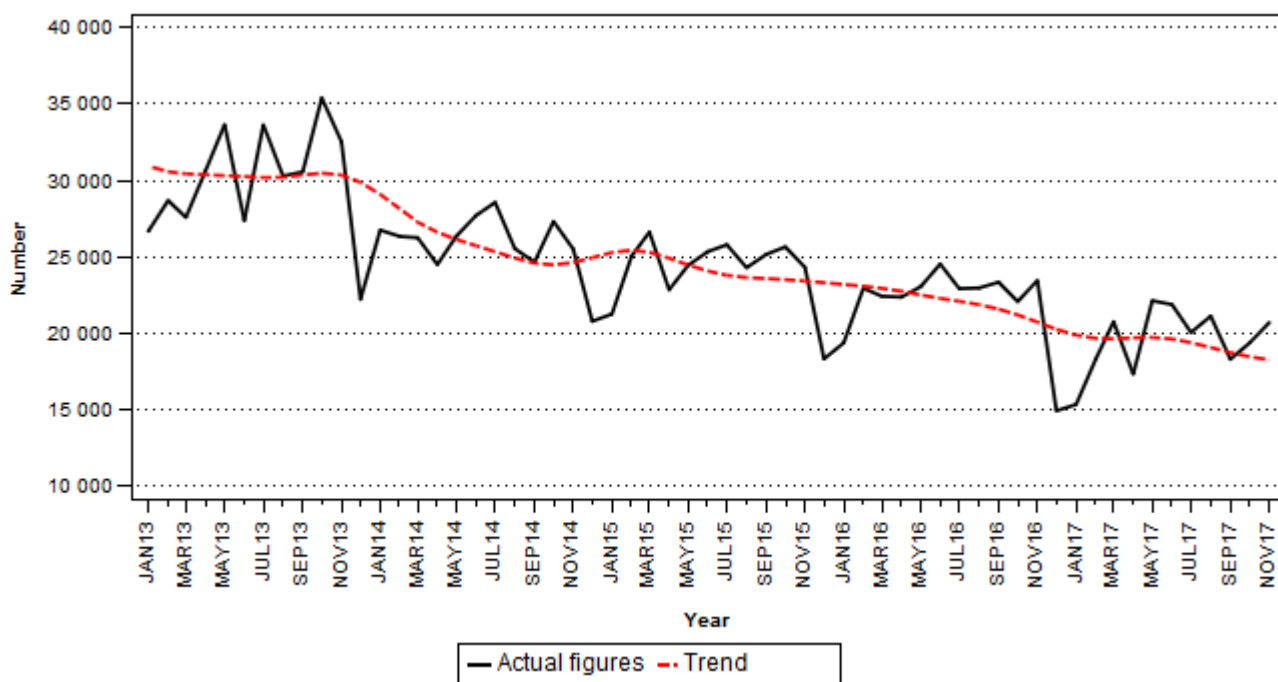


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2016	Nov-16	1/ Oct-17	1/ Nov-17	2016	Nov-16	1/ Oct-17	1/ Nov-17
Cases recorded	Actual figures	700 485	65 619	62 348	62 516	602 530	56 795	54 708	54 911
	Seasonally adjusted		60 561	54 650	55 565		50 822	48 357	47 036
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	39 656	3 028	3 201	3 457	29 919	2 190	2 297	2 565
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	21 886	1 826	1 979	2 060	16 506	1 500	1 576	1 657
	Services - Professional	83 019	7 627	6 228	6 326	72 241	6 689	5 383	5 410
	Services - Other	106 305	9 646	9 892	8 901	89 744	8 164	8 554	7 559
	Rent	31 195	2 816	3 176	3 222	24 197	2 197	2 509	2 360
	Money lent	155 809	15 051	12 232	12 524	145 604	14 021	11 566	11 509
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	90 564	8 649	7 828	7 338	84 008	7 683	7 231	6 765
	Other debts	117 781	10 481	11 523	11 071	103 779	9 143	10 159	9 819
	Total - Actual figures	646 215	59 124	56 059	54 899	565 998	51 587	49 275	47 644
Total - Seasonally adjusted		53 993	48 935	48 595		47 327	42 845	42 356	

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2016	Nov-16	1/ Oct-17	1/ Nov-17	2016	Nov-16	1/ Oct-17	1/ Nov-17
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	17 058	1 293	1 281	1 328	12 948	991	920	981
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 068	593	496	632	6 039	511	423	545
	Services - Professional	44 011	3 364	2 880	3 193	39 091	2 945	2 631	2 946
	Services - Other	41 276	3 560	3 420	3 338	35 567	3 120	3 041	2 965
	Rent	18 296	2 213	1 791	1 785	15 162	1 914	1 495	1 495
	Money lent	60 447	6 114	3 806	4 121	55 379	5 719	3 474	3 831
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	25 021	2 571	2 119	2 405	21 461	2 245	1 780	2 073
	Other debts	51 152	3 742	3 563	3 885	45 458	3 319	3 182	3 524
	Total - Actual figures	264 329	23 450	19 356	20 687	231 105	20 764	16 946	18 360
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		21 857	18 096	18 827		19 431	15 846	16 822

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2016	Nov-16	1/ Oct-17	1/ Nov-17	2016	Nov-16	1/ Oct-17	1/ Nov-17
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	253 299	22 546	24 040	24 100	131 337	12 743	11 014	10 025
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	96 673	8 437	7 724	15 871	83 906	7 025	6 590	13 574
	Services - Professional	243 371	19 709	29 551	30 041	208 795	16 514	26 461	26 796
	Services - Other	542 398	48 993	50 030	50 544	432 972	40 368	41 937	41 710
	Rent	322 885	38 177	32 764	32 124	224 770	28 963	24 233	23 240
	Money lent	1 139 611	113 117	90 881	85 760	1 029 219	104 601	83 904	80 799
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	434 549	45 184	41 792	49 063	363 747	37 360	35 125	41 529
	Other debts	989 698	74 362	68 532	64 479	722 123	59 839	50 083	53 720
	Total - Actual figures	4 022 484	370 525	345 314	351 982	3 196 869	307 413	279 347	291 393
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		330 269	323 196	313 004		279 620	260 919	264 651

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 November 2016 and the three months ended November 2017

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Sep – Nov 2016	Actual estimates Sep – Nov 2017	% change between Sep – Nov 2016 and Sep – Nov 2017	Difference between Sep – Nov 2016 and Sep – Nov 2017
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	176 961	158 236	-10,6	-18 725
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	68 858	58 349	-15,3	-10 509
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 074,3	1 018,1	-5,2	-56,2

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 2016 and the three months ended November 2017 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	-0,3	-0,3	0,1
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,3	-0,1	0,8
Services - Professional	-2,4	-3,3	1,3
Services - Other	-0,5	-0,6	0,2
Rent	0,6	-0,1	-0,1
Money lent	-6,2	-8,2	-4,5
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,1	-0,4	1,8
Other debts	-0,1	-2,3	-4,7
Total	-10,6	-15,3	-5,2

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 2016, 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 2016	Actual estimates November 2017	% change between November 2016 and November 2017	Difference between November 2016 and November 2017
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	59 124	54 899	-7,1	-4 225
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	23 450	20 687	-11,8	-2 763
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	370,5	352,0	-5,0	-18,5

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
2016	Nov	10 398	4 717	899	4 411	10 014	3 276	19 791	3 151	2 467	59 124
	Dec	5 768	2 145	509	2 851	5 978	1 243	13 343	2 009	1 733	35 579
2017	Jan	6 630	3 224	554	3 356	5 507	2 178	16 203	1 541	1 969	41 162
	Feb	8 707	3 749	811	3 309	8 903	2 185	18 837	2 409	2 136	51 046
	Mar	10 515	4 635	1 040	3 941	8 972	2 538	20 565	2 661	2 479	57 346
	Apr	6 795	3 197	618	2 807	7 746	1 954	15 012	1 999	2 330	42 458
	May	9 102	4 100	808	3 355	9 295	2 358	18 167	2 530	2 096	51 811
	Jun	7 263	3 923	568	3 529	8 739	2 083	17 602	2 270	2 025	48 002
	Jul	7 914	3 368	876	2 755	8 662	2 079	16 897	2 249	2 102	46 902
	Aug	8 188	3 820	913	3 724	9 297	2 282	15 858	2 269	1 857	48 208
	Sep	7 081	3 527	531	3 500	9 689	2 258	16 361	2 356	1 975	47 278
	Oct	10 612	4 025	941	4 133	10 752	2 368	18 640	2 427	2 161	56 059
	Nov	9 693	4 108	748	3 737	11 055	2 139	18 751	2 550	2 118	54 899

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
2016	Nov	4 165	2 613	254	2 676	4 208	1 493	5 309	1 148	1 584	23 450
	Dec	2 147	1 240	410	1 319	2 698	715	4 416	943	1 046	14 934
2017	Jan	2 541	2 201	226	1 657	2 034	659	3 922	1 048	1 054	15 342
	Feb	3 370	2 019	292	1 788	3 843	925	4 211	765	1 099	18 312
	Mar	4 019	2 876	539	2 175	3 577	1 001	3 999	1 265	1 300	20 751
	Apr	2 475	2 309	351	2 185	3 386	781	3 664	863	1 318	17 332
	May	4 442	2 732	480	2 594	3 954	1 006	4 610	1 048	1 262	22 128
	Jun	3 368	3 627	389	2 370	3 964	1 100	4 256	1 159	1 646	21 879
	Jul	3 314	2 584	381	2 424	3 951	909	4 306	930	1 252	20 051
	Aug	3 418	2 614	412	2 409	4 586	985	4 460	1 025	1 210	21 119
	Sep	2 524	2 093	359	1 915	4 337	914	4 010	1 052	1 102	18 306
	Oct	2 698	2 567	464	2 016	4 308	674	4 443	1 053	1 133	19 356
	Nov	3 214	2 674	488	2 023	4 837	831	4 227	1 207	1 186	20 687

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
2016	Nov	83 923	48 625	2 543	42 330	42 096	14 584	97 217	23 216	15 991	370 525
	Dec	42 778	34 684	3 662	18 302	38 753	10 860	73 189	24 034	5 811	252 073
2017	Jan	42 093	44 928	3 266	21 097	27 757	9 980	58 734	24 055	8 894	240 804
	Feb	67 812	35 384	3 094	19 788	39 303	14 398	81 496	15 697	6 533	283 505
	Mar	71 623	55 846	6 302	26 937	46 972	12 822	95 561	26 632	13 150	355 845
	Apr	50 854	43 565	3 289	25 210	40 619	11 248	68 299	18 608	12 992	274 684
	May	93 019	57 820	5 662	36 927	53 567	15 437	109 482	20 889	10 124	402 927
	Jun	66 175	42 752	5 050	35 011	42 347	16 976	100 206	27 212	14 320	350 049
	Jul	75 513	42 107	3 528	28 203	48 404	15 257	117 998	21 315	11 234	363 559
	Aug	72 344	56 148	3 477	33 413	64 052	13 728	109 487	18 897	8 456	380 002
	Sep	62 053	43 197	3 507	21 904	43 157	14 234	106 964	20 044	5 722	320 782
	Oct	59 381	52 158	4 550	25 920	58 123	10 015	108 307	20 078	6 782	345 314
	Nov	72 121	41 868	5 575	27 027	69 361	11 174	92 519	24 124	8 213	351 982

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Purpose of the survey	3	<p>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.</p>
Scope of the survey	4	<p>This survey covers:</p> <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	<p>The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>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.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by email, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.</p>
Collection rate	7	<p>The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for November 2017 was 84,7%. The collection rate for October 2017 was 89,2%.</p>
Seasonal adjustment	8	<p>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.</p>
Trend cycle	9	<p>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.</p>
Unpublished statistics	10	<p>In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * Revised figures</p>

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.

