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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for September 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of September 2014

Actual estimates	September 2014	% change between September 2013 and September 2014	% change between Jul – Sep 2013 and Jul – Sep 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	67 579	-1,8	-5,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	24 684	-19,2	-16,6
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	333,7	-17,1	-21,7

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 5,5% in the third quarter of 2014 compared with the third quarter of 2013. A 1,8% decrease was recorded between September 2013 and September 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 5,5% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -3,3 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -2,8 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -1,4 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 16,6% in the third quarter of 2014 compared with the third quarter of 2013. A decrease of 19,2% was recorded year-on-year in September 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 16,6% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,4 percentage points);
- services (contributing -3,3 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -3,3 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 21,7% between the third quarter of 2013 and the third quarter of 2014. A year-on-year decrease of 17,1% was recorded in September 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 21,7% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -9,1 percentage points);
- services (contributing -4,4 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -2,5 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In September 2014, 24 684 civil judgements for debt amounting to R333,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R95,3 million or 28,6%);
- ‘other’ debts (R70,4 million or 21,1%); and
- services (R67,8 million or 20,3%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

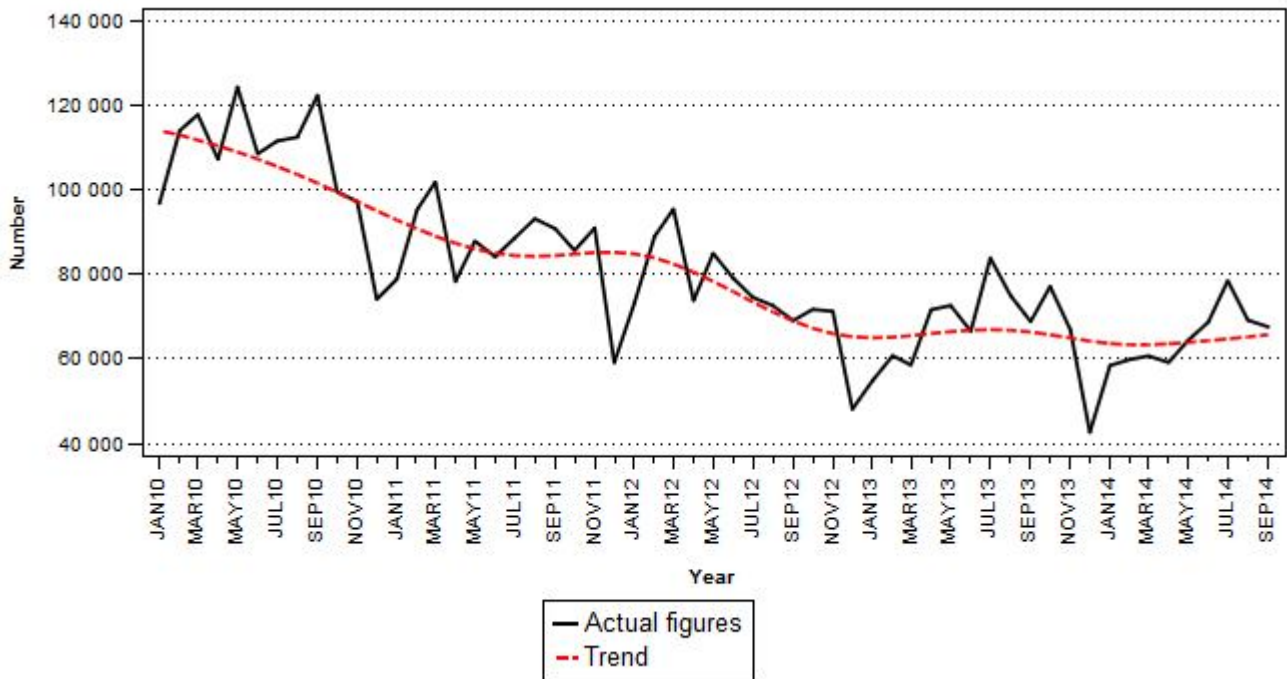
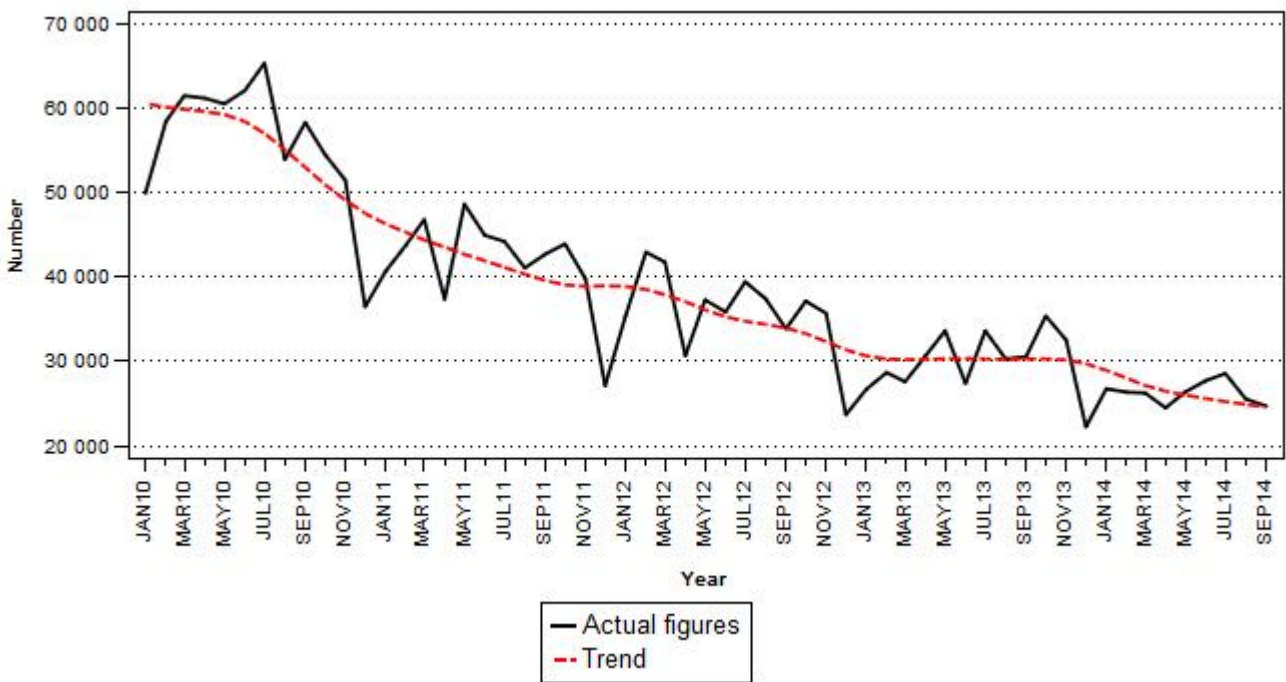


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Sep-13	1/ Aug-14	1/ Sep-14	2013	Sep-13	1/ Aug-14	1/ Sep-14
Cases recorded	Actual figures	885 940	76 463	74 128	72 580	771 916	67 664	65 275	62 091
	Seasonally adjusted		73 459	68 906	70 028		67 021	61 791	61 622
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	63 965	5 778	4 545	4 735	50 057	4 600	3 616	3 846
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	25 222	2 679	2 126	2 883	19 255	2 210	1 741	2 396
	Services - Professional	101 634	8 457	8 516	7 123	90 642	7 720	7 359	6 414
	Services - Other	136 153	11 176	10 003	10 637	119 189	9 795	8 428	8 970
	Rent	45 468	4 636	3 635	3 722	36 855	3 856	2 956	3 023
	Money lent	189 748	14 877	18 520	17 364	178 114	13 923	17 834	16 341
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	112 485	8 788	9 232	7 849	98 296	7 642	8 316	7 267
	Other debts	124 526	12 433	12 563	13 266	113 714	11 463	11 334	12 038
	Total - Actual figures	799 201	68 824	69 140	67 579	706 122	61 209	61 584	60 295
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		66 648	64 483	65 705		61 082	58 863	60 379

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

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2013	Sep-13	1/ Aug-14	1/ Sep-14	2013	Sep-13	1/ Aug-14	1/ Sep-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	30 599	2 136	1 630	1 621	24 389	1 657	1 189	1 223
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 822	713	660	596	5 965	554	513	446
	Services - Professional	54 963	4 008	4 647	4 174	50 053	3 695	4 015	3 729
	Services - Other	54 737	5 044	3 680	3 616	47 396	4 479	3 162	2 888
	Rent	21 214	1 912	1 066	1 544	17 623	1 636	838	1 254
	Money lent	95 676	8 594	6 404	6 420	88 991	7 814	6 090	6 081
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	34 509	3 371	2 323	2 141	29 923	2 930	1 984	1 812
	Other debts	59 596	4 772	5 122	4 572	53 770	4 229	4 810	4 272
	Total - Actual figures	359 116	30 550	25 532	24 684	318 110	26 994	22 601	21 705
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		29 727	24 591	24 214		26 712	21 997	21 676

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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	Sep-13	1/ Aug-14	1/ Sep-14	2013	Sep-13	1/ Aug-14	1/ Sep-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	363 472	30 811	21 729	31 507	210 209	19 763	12 106	13 155
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	122 663	11 365	7 421	5 969	99 411	9 259	6 248	5 031
	Services - Professional	278 762	20 279	19 830	24 676	235 197	17 836	17 084	22 276
	Services - Other	591 013	45 003	32 563	43 142	472 533	36 350	25 592	29 759
	Rent	349 342	36 669	22 169	28 159	242 224	19 766	16 495	22 306
	Money lent	1 207 161	100 735	89 908	95 319	1 088 548	90 695	85 668	90 551
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 275	35 706	35 286	34 543	363 598	28 803	30 814	29 968
	Other debts	1 412 365	121 717	82 521	70 356	785 059	67 855	61 890	59 631
	Total - Actual figures	4 768 053	402 285	311 427	333 671	3 496 779	290 327	255 897	272 677
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		391 888	289 098	324 729		286 386	238 462	269 326

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the third quarter of 2013 and the third quarter of 2014

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jul – Sep 2013	Actual estimates Jul – Sep 2014	% change between Jul – Sep 2013 and Jul – Sep 2014	Difference between Jul – Sep 2013 and Jul – Sep 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	227 705	215 197	-5,5	-12 508
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	94 442	78 767	-16,6	-15 675
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 272,0	995,4	-21,7	-276,6

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 third quarter of 2013 and the third quarter of 2014 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the % change in the total		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,4	-2,2	-1,6
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,1	-0,1	-0,7
Services - Professional	-1,0	-0,1	-0,2
Services - Other	-2,3	-3,2	-4,2
Rent	-1,4	-2,3	-2,5
Money lent	2,3	-6,4	-2,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,8	-3,3	-1,1
Other debts	1,0	1,0	-9,1
Total	-5,5	-16,6	-21,7

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 July to September 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 September 2013	Actual estimates September 2014	% change between September 2013 and September 2014	Difference between September 2013 and September 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	68 824	67 579	-1,8	-1 245
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	30 550	24 684	-19,2	-5 866
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	402,3	333,7	-17,1	-68,6

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	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	5 591	3 662	769	2 781	7 129	3 127	14 984	2 037	2 510	42 590
2014	January	8 017	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	58 411
	February	8 624	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	59 855
	March	9 531	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 677
	April	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
	June	13 090	5 587	1 276	4 254	9 564	3 357	25 994	3 107	2 456	68 685
	July	12 853	6 730	1 505	* 4 864	10 610	3 691	32 249	3 514	2 462	78 478
	August 1/	8 714	6 089	1 282	3 903	10 645	3 754	28 346	3 988	2 419	69 140
	September 1/	12 079	5 130	976	4 000	10 359	3 230	26 525	3 052	2 228	67 579

1/ Preliminary.

*Revised.

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	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	3 103	3 049	454	1 976	2 834	1 708	6 076	1 096	1 928	22 224
2014	January	4 195	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	26 740
	February	4 753	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	26 329
	March	4 446	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 247
	April	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
	June	5 315	4 102	766	3 401	3 595	1 518	5 413	1 628	1 960	27 698
	July	5 529	3 913	631	* 3 607	3 685	1 515	5 884	1 743	2 044	28 551
	August 1/	4 491	3 117	721	2 783	3 699	1 281	6 266	1 228	1 946	25 532
	September 1/	4 662	2 946	684	2 342	4 051	1 300	5 566	1 368	1 765	24 684

1/ Preliminary.

*Revised.

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	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	56 313	33 514	4 047	19 776	39 281	17 039	98 680	25 380	12 177	306 207
	January	64 948	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	312 974
2014	February	117 751	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 968	402 499
	March	74 236	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 188
	April	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
	June	91 053	43 723	5 073	32 985	34 968	12 856	72 497	21 943	12 050	327 148
	July	84 131	52 402	4 934	* 33 840	34 975	14 670	79 929	33 696	11 747	350 324
	August 1/	56 977	41 055	5 043	27 985	38 151	14 280	97 007	19 280	11 649	311 427
	September 1/	68 262	47 878	6 171	37 095	36 823	12 234	83 504	33 117	8 587	333 671

1/ Preliminary.

*Revised.

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 September 2014 was 88,2%. The improved collection rate for August 2014 was 87,2%.
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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