



# SA's message of freedom burns bright

**MPILETSO MOTUMI**

**T**HE FLAME of Democracy and beam of light were lit for the first time last night in celebration of the 15th anniversary of the signing of the constitution.

The new addition to Joburg night skyline will be seen shining 250m high into the sky, almost as high as the heights of the landmark Brixton and Hillbrow towers.

Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe was on hand to light the flame last night. The celebration was hosted by the Constitution Hill Trust.

Trust chairman Cyril Ramaphosa said: "When we stood in the sun in front of Parliament 15 years ago to celebrate the adoption of our new democratic constitution, we were a country united.

"The writing of the constitution, which saw a politically diverse body of former enemies come together, has become an international reference point in law-making and an example of what participatory democracy should be," he said.

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng and former chief justices

## Symbol of democratic constitution lights up city skyline



**CARRYING THE TORCH: Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe holds the Flame of Democracy at Constitution Hill last night.**

Sandile Ngcobo, Pius Langa and Arthur Chaskallson passed the flame that was lit by Nelson Mandela in Qunu on Saturday, and was then brought to Joburg to light up the city, in honour of the

freedom he fought for.

The flame burns in a beautifully crafted bronze bowl bearing the inscription "Freedom, human dignity, equality".

The base represents the coming

together of the Constitutional Court judges, South Africa's democracy and the constitution.

The flame is placed in one of the four remaining stairwells of the Awaiting Trial Block prison. This

symbolises the threshold between the incarceration that was inherent in life under apartheid, and the hard-won freedoms that are the foundation of South African life today.

Motlanthe said the flame "must never blow out, but (must) forever cast light on our nation. The flame must symbolise our inner strength and we must be able to pass it on to the coming generations".

The Constitution Hill Trust has also mounted an exhibition in the foyer of the Constitutional Court, which will stay in place from today until April 2012.

For the first time, each of the five constitutions adopted in South Africa's history will be on view, and pictures will illustrate the country's journey to democracy.

The final signed copy of the 1996 constitution, which has not been on display before, will take pride of place directly outside the Constitutional Court chamber.

"We needed to have an iconic symbol of our constitution, something with deep meaning and substance," said Ramaphosa.

"The flame should fuel the confidence of our future," he added.

**LIGHTING THE WAY: The Flame of Democracy at Constitution Hill, a beam of light, switched on for the first time during the event, will be projected into Joburg's sky every night as a visible reminder of our democracy.**  
PICTURES: MATTHEWS BALOYI