



## Item 6 Adoption of the Outcome of the UPR of Ghana

Human Rights Watch welcomes the recommendations in the UPR report and Ghana's commitment to implementing reforms to protect the rights of people with disabilities, including by improving the domestic legal framework; adopting programs to encourage positive community engagement with people with disabilities; and rolling out oversight measures in psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps.

These are positive steps. But our research in Ghana found a significant number of serious human rights abuses that must be addressed immediately in psychiatric hospitals, people with mental disabilities face involuntary admission and arbitrary and prolonged detention, and inadequate conditions, including overcrowding, poor hygiene, forced seclusion, lack of shelter, physical and verbal abuse, and involuntary treatment, including electroconvulsive therapy. In prayer camps, people with mental disabilities are chained – sometimes outdoors – and denied food and medication and adequate shelter.

The government of Ghana should act immediately to take the following steps:

- improve conditions in public psychiatric hospitals by: ensuring adequate food, shelter and health care; and by prohibiting practices of beating patients, prolonged seclusion, and arbitrary detention and treatment;
- monitor prayer camps and other non-orthodox mental health service providers to ensure that individuals are not held against their will, subjected to forced fasting or chaining, or denied access to appropriate health care;
- develop the necessary legislative instrument to implement the new mental health law as a matter of priority; and
- prosecute inhumane practices, including torture, in psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps.

In the longer-term, Ghana should also:

- allocate sufficient resources to developing voluntary community-based mental health services in consultation with persons with mental disabilities and their representative organizations;
- train and recruit more mental health professionals to improve the doctor/nurse-patient ratio; and
- increase the number of non-medical staff in psychiatric hospitals.

Ghana's ultimate goal should be to ensure community integration of people with mental disabilities, as envisaged by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In all of these efforts, people with disabilities and their representative organizations should be invited to participate fully in planning, implementing and monitoring of policies and programs on mental health and disability.

Ghana's support for the recommendations received during the UPR is an important step towards protecting the rights of people with disabilities. However, until people with disabilities can live freely in the community without prejudice, violence and discriminatory treatment, Ghana must continue to implement reforms to meet its obligation under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.