

## 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review

### Statement on Ghana

Over the last several years, Ghana has taken positive steps in the field of mental health by establishing the Mental Health Authority, training mental health professionals, conducting awareness-raising on mental health, engaging with prayer camp leaders to prevent abusive practices and even releasing 16 people shackled in one prayer camp last year. However, based on a visit in October 2017 and meetings with senior government officials, some of the Authority's most important mandates are still not implemented. For example, the visiting committees in charge of conducting monitoring of psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps, and the Mental Health Tribunal, mandated to receive complaints over abuse in mental health facilities, are not yet fully operational.

Despite important progress, conditions in psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps have not significantly improved since Human Rights Watch extensively documented a range of abuses in 2012. Psychiatric hospitals remain overcrowded and unsanitary. Persons with real or perceived psychosocial disabilities continue to live in psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps against their will and with little to no possibility of challenging their confinement.

The Minister of Finance has not yet established the levy to fund mental health services, provided for in the Mental Health Act. Some provisions in the Mental Health Act presume the incapacity of persons with psychosocial disabilities, limiting their ability to make decisions about where they live and what treatment they receive, and undermining their rights under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We appreciate the many recommendations in the Working Group Report that address the ongoing human rights abuses against people with psychosocial disabilities. Further, we call on the government to:

- Enforce the ban on chaining and other forms of inhumane and degrading treatment through effective monitoring of psychiatric facilities and prayer camps by setting up the Mental Health Review Tribunal and visiting committees. And to,
- Invest in community mental health services to support people with psychosocial disabilities on the basis of their free and informed consent, as well as adequate support for housing, independent living, and job training; by specifically, setting up the levy to fund mental health services as a matter of priority.