I am Julianne Versnel of the Second Amendment Foundation. I would like to address the topic of violence against women and the natural right of self-defense.

Mr. Chairman, more women are living in isolation because of societal ostracization caused by physical and mental disfigurements inflicted by men each year than are murdered with small arms. The acid burn victims in India, the women raped by armed-gangs in Mexico, and the mutilated, and do not forget murdered, victims of honor violence that occurs even in Europe, the Americas and Australia are examples of these unspeakable crimes.

Gender violence often is perpetrated by male familial members who do so with immunity and impunity--and in many instances with governments turning a blind eye,--condoning or even endorsing it.

Mister Chairman, the United Nations recognizes the right of governments to defend themselves, and to possess the means to do so. Yet this body perpetuates the situation that keeps the number of women victims growing by denying them, and in fact all human beings, the means to, decrying even their right to, defend themselves. They are the victims not of small arms, but of political philosophies and state policies that say only governments are worthy of defending themselves. To argue that people have the right to live but not to defend their lives is to argue in favor of continuing to keep women at risk of violence where government does little to protect them.

Mr. Chairman, this body must address the right of women to defend themselves and their right to have the physical means, including small arms, to do so. Or, acknowledge the hypocrisy inherent in proclaiming support for women's causes while keeping them vulnerable to male-perpetuated violence.

Thank you.