SUBJECT: THREE PATRIOTIC UNION ACTIVISTS MURDERED

1. (U) THREE ACTIVISTS IN THE LEFTIST PATRIOTIC UNION PARTY (UP) IN THE SMALL CITY OF MESETAS, META DEPARTMENT, WERE KILLED OCTOBER 29 WHEN THE CAR IN WHICH THEY WERE RIDING WAS INTERCEPTED BY UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN. THE THREE UP ACTIVISTS WERE OFFICIALS OF THE MESETAS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

2. (U) THE DEAD WERE IDENTIFIED AS RAFAEL MOYA HERNANDEZ, SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WORKS IN MESETAS, AND TWO WORKERS IN THE AGENCY, LUIS EDUARDO MARTINEZ AND JORGE ELIAS SOSA RAMOS. MESETAS HAS BEEN THE SITE OF SEVERAL ATTACKS AGAINST UP ACTIVISTS IN RECENT MONTHS. ON SEPTEMBER 14, A UP OFFICIAL AND HIS FAMILY WERE MURDERED BY PRESUMED RIGHTWING PARAMILITARIES (REFTEL A).
3. (U) THE MAYOR OF MESETAS, MIGUEL ANTONIO RUBIO, also a UP member, said that all indications point to a campaign to exterminate the UP in META department. Rubio was himself a target of an attack last month but escaped unharmed.

4. (C) COMMENT: The most recent killings in Meetas, which came just two days after the UP's expected poor showing in national congressional elections, is further proof that the party's political irrelevance is not saving it from a vengeful right, which views it as the legal and reachable arm of FARC guerrillas.

5. (C) After the last Meetas killing, a top UP official in BOGOTA speculated to POLOFF that the attacks were carried out by paramilitaries associated with narco-tainted Emerald Baron Victor Carranza. They seem prime suspects in the latest murders as well. Meetas Mayor Rubio, who spoke of a campaign of extermination against UP officials in this isolated region of Colombia, is apparently not exaggerating. BUSBY