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But in the crowd of mainly Hondurans were also Bangladeshis, as reported by several English and Spanish-language US media outlets. The first of the migrants travelling with the caravan, which at one point was made up of around 7,000 people, eventually reached the US border in November.

What this showed is that migrants entering the US through its southern border was not exclusively comprised of Mexicans and other Central Americans.

Senior national security fellow at the US-based think tank Centre for Immigration Studies, Todd Bensman, interviewed a Bangladeshi migrant in Costa Rican in mid-December last year. In the short video in an immigration processing centre, 29-year-old Omar Farouk said he was from Feni and left to "save my life and stay freely".

Farouk travelled from Dubai to Brazil, then on to Colombia and Panama before Costa Rica, en route to the US border. In the account of his route so far, Farouk said that the Panama mountains and jungles were "very difficult and risky". When Bensman pressed Farouk on whether Islamists, namely the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, were problems in Bangladesh, Farouk insisted that the

main problems were "political".

Bensman has extensively written on the terror threat posed by the Central American route migrants were taking to reach the US. He wrote that while migrants like Farouk could simply be economic migrants, they need to be vetted properly to ensure that do not pose an Islamist "threat" to US border and homeland security, a process made difficult by the fact that more and more Bangladeshi migrants were following the same route.

Many Bangladeshis have been detained in the US or stuck across the border in Mexico or other countries in Central America. As of September 21, 2018, 650 Bangladeshis were arrested in the border town of Laredo that year. This was up from 182 arrests in 2017 and only one in 2016. US Customs and Border Protection had announced in 2018 that Laredo was, for two years in a row now, the main crossing point for Bangladeshis illegally crossing the over 3,000-kilometres border between Mexico and the US.

The town is separated from Mexico by only the Rio Grande river. During a three-week period in September, more than 100 Bangladeshis were arrested and border officials said that most were men between the ages of 18 and 35 and who

paid up to USD 27,000 for the entire smuggling trip. Bangladeshis are being portrayed in local media as coming from a country with Islamist terrorist networks and which is a drug hotbed.

Migration networks, as seen in the case of Europe and East Asia, are often built on the routes taken by others and the road to the US was taken up by Bangladeshis (and those of other nationalities) based on the travel routes of smuggling networks operating in Latin America for decades now. South Asian migrants are reported to take a plane to South America (especially to countries such as Ecuador with lax visa restrictions) and make their way up through Colombia and Panama to Guatemala and Mexico in Central America and then across to the US, their final destination. While Naim crossed through Ecuador's jungles with a trafficker, Hridoy flew to South Africa and then to Mexico directly with the help of two different traffickers.

A four-day Interpol operation on migrant smuggling networks across 11 countries in the Americas last year led to 49 arrests and recovery of USD two million. It also found that South Asian migrants, primarily from Bangladesh, India and Nepal, paid between USD 15,000 to 30,000 to get to the US, as reported by the BBC.

