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## FROM THE SENATE TO THE PALACE: FROM “UNLIKELY IN POLITICS” TO THE STRONGEST NOMINEE FOR THE 2026 ELECTIONS

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**Abstract:** This article examines the political trajectory of Mailza Assis, from her performance as a senator to her rise as one of Acre's main political leaders and a strong candidate for governor in 2026. The research explores her capacity for political articulation, leadership in facing crises and her achievements as a defender of women's rights. Mailza has become one of the most relevant figures in Acre's politics, transforming herself from an "improbable in politics" to one of the strongest candidates for the 2026 election.

**Keywords:** Female leadership, public policies, political crisis, 2026 election, public management, political protagonism, political trajectory.

## INTRODUCTION

Brazilian politics has always been dominated by a male structure, but women have challenged this pattern, bringing new perspectives and practices to the political system (Dufresne, 2016). Mailza Assis is a clear example of this transformation. Considered an "unlikely" figure in Acre politics, she has defied all expectations and become one of the most influential and respected leaders in the region. Her journey is marked by a commitment to social causes, especially women, young people and mothers, through transformative public policies.

During her term as senator, Mailza allocated more than R\$500 million in amendments to Acre, with investments in health, public security, urban infrastructure, family farming and policies to support women. These funds have helped transform various regions of the state, improving the quality of life of Acreans, especially in the most vulnerable areas.

In addition, his management of the Secretariat of Social Assistance and Human Rights (SEASDH) is marked by actions in the areas of Social Assistance, Human Rights and Food Security, with an emphasis on qualified listening to civil servants and the inclusion of councils to strengthen SEASDH's actions.

Its actions during crises, such as floods and drought, exemplify its direct and effective leadership, coordinating shelters and emergency resources for the affected population.

## METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted through qualitative analysis, with a review of official documents, interviews with political and community leaders in Acre, as well as research into reports and Mailza's public speeches. The sources used aim to provide an in-depth analysis of Mailza's political activities, with an emphasis on her capacity for political articulation and public policies aimed at inclusion and human rights. The interviews conducted were fundamental to understanding the effectiveness of Mailza's actions, allowing a more detailed view of the strategies implemented during her administration.

## FROM "UNLIKELY IN POLITICS" TO THE SENATE: MAILZA'S RISE

Considered an "improbable politician" due to her profile without much of a political background, Mailza went against all predictions. Her career in the Senate was marked by her fight for more investment in infrastructure, health and education for Acre, as well as her defense of the inclusion of women in politics. Her ability to establish alliances, secure federal resources and stand firm in difficult times was crucial to the success of her career. As Power (2019) points out, women who challenge the status quo not only face the difficulties of the political system, but also create new spaces for inclusion and social justice.

Her work is not limited to local issues. Mailza is one of the most active voices in the defense of public policies for women throughout Acre, proposing changes that seek to guarantee female autonomy and the empowerment of women in various sectors. As Mintzberg (2010) and Dufresne (2016) note, true political leadership

comes when you create a genuine connection with the needs of the population and have the courage to lead real change.

### **MAILZA IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT: ADVANCES AND ACTIONS IN THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SECRETARIAT**

When she took over the Secretariat for Social Assistance and Human Rights, Mailza deepened her commitment to the most vulnerable population, bringing in public policies that serve women, young people and families at risk. Her ability to coordinate actions with various spheres of government and civil society is one of the hallmarks of her administration. During the floods and drought that affected Acre, Mailza was on the front line, personally coordinating the distribution of resources and setting up shelters for those affected. This type of leadership, as Boin (2018) argues, is essential in times of crisis, as it demonstrates that the leader is actively committed to solutions.

An example of innovation in his administration was the implementation of the SEASDH's Server Appreciation Center, an initiative aimed at promoting the well-being of civil servants, with actions focused on mental health, professional appreciation and encouraging continuous development. This project has been such a success that other state departments have also joined the model, expanding its reach and positive impact among civil servants. The creation of the center demonstrates Mailza's vision of the importance of investing in the qualification and well-being of the work team in order to guarantee excellent service to the population.

Her administration also stood out for the "social closet", which aims to offer dignity to women in vulnerable situations. This action symbolizes Mailza's vision, which believes that empowerment begins with self-esteem. Her leadership is not limited to concrete actions,

but extends to meeting women's emotional and psychological needs, a fundamental factor in transforming lives.

### **MAILZA'S LEGITIMACY AS A WOMEN'S LEADER: PROTAGONISM AND INSPIRATION**

Mailza is not just a politician, but a source of inspiration for many women who, like her, see themselves as "unlikely". Her career is marked by a real commitment to the women's cause, from her first steps in public life to her work as a senator and deputy governor. Mailza has built her story by facing challenges and paving the way for other women, being a model of strength, courage and overcoming. As Power (2019) and Dufresne (2016) point out, true female leadership goes beyond political action: it involves a process of empowering the people around her.

Since the beginning of her career, Mailza has defended women's rights and worked to ensure effective public policies. Her first parliamentary amendment in the Senate earmarked funds for the construction of three units of the Brazilian Women's House in Acre. The first of these was inaugurated on January 22, 2025, in Cruzeiro do Sul, with an investment of R\$2.2 million. The other two units are planned for the municipalities of Epitaciolândia, currently in the bidding phase, and Rio Branco.

Its presence on social media also reflects this commitment. Her image has undergone a "makeover", humanizing her and bringing her even closer to the people. By sharing her experiences and daily struggles, Mailza has created a direct communication channel with the population and especially with the women, mothers and young people who find her an authentic and inspiring figure. Her genuine leadership is manifested in her ability to connect with people and her determination to transform lives through politics.

## **MAILZA AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY IN ACRE**

Mailza Assis has stood out substantially on the Acre political scene, not only as a leader who strengthens the Progressive Party, but as a central figure who has become one of the most solid and prepared options for the 2026 elections. Her career is marked by an undeniable political coherence, which reflects her philosophy of ethical action and commitment to the demands of the people. This coherence, based on principles of social justice and commitment to popular causes, has made her a leading figure in the state.

Throughout her career, her loyalty to Governor Gladson Cameli has proved essential, especially during the most difficult times, when the political and administrative crisis required a firm partnership focused on practical solutions. Mailza has not only supported Cameli during times of adversity, but has also been able to articulate with mastery to ensure that the interests of the state and the people are met efficiently. Their dedication and mutual trust reinforce Mailza's view of herself as a loyal and upright leader, in line with the principles of her political philosophy.

Her loyalty also extends to her party, the Progressistas. Mailza has been a tireless advocate for the unity and strengthening of the party in Acre. Her work with the party is guided

by the conviction that, in order to achieve progress, you need a solid and unified base. Her dedication to the party is not only strategic, but reflects her belief in a collective political project, focused on the well-being of the population and building a better future for Acre.

This ability to remain faithful to her principles, to the governor and to the party, combined with her political competence and vision for the future, makes Mailza one of the most prepared and legitimate leaders to lead Acre in the 2026 elections. She is seen as the strongest candidate to face the challenges of the state's future, thanks to her dedication, loyalty and deep commitment to improving living conditions for all Acreans.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mailza Assis is the embodiment of transformative politics, challenging traditional patterns and paving the way for new forms of leadership that are more inclusive and oriented towards social well-being. Her trajectory, marked by challenges, overcoming and victories, reveals a leadership that goes beyond conventional politics. The strengthening of her candidacy for governor in 2026 reflects the confidence and hope she has generated in various parts of Acre, especially among women, young people and citizens who see her as a source of inspiration and change.

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