



Roger Akelius.
Image: Zanna Nordqvist.

TODAY'S ETC | Akelius Foundation's record donation to Gaza of 800 million kronor will go towards building 400 new schools.

“If you have a lot of money, it should be used in the right way. And this is a huge tragedy,” he says.



Felicia Larsson
Text



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The Akelius Foundation has previously donated 100 million kronor to Palestine via SOS Children's Villages, which, among other things, went towards building a school in Gaza.

– Now I have seen pictures that show that only pieces of concrete remain of that school, Roger Akelius, real estate entrepreneur and founder of the charitable foundation, tells Dagens ETC.

Friday's announcement that the government is donating 400 million kronor to Unicef Sweden in support of Gaza prompted the Akelius Foundation to act: according to Roger Akelius, it only took fifteen minutes before it was decided that the foundation would donate a record-breaking **800 million kronor to support Gaza**, something that **Aftonbladet** was the first to notice.

– We were initially thinking of matching the donation. But then I said we should double it, because the need is so enormous, says Roger Akelius.

Long commitment

Roger Akelius has previously been open about his long-standing commitment to Palestine and personally visited a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon in 1985.

– There is no difference between a Palestinian seven-year-old's hunger and a Swedish seven-year-old's hunger. They have the same feelings and thoughts, he says and continues:

– The only difference is that the Palestinian child may have just had his parents crushed. It is a deliberate massacre. If you can somehow help make the children who have been traumatized in this way feel a little better, I want to contribute to that.

The idea is that the money will go towards building 400 schools that will accommodate 250 children each.

– The school not only provides education but is also an environment where children can have some positive moments,

with play and friends. It will also go towards food, you can't have a school with hungry children.

– The difficult thing about aid work is finding good projects that can actually be implemented. But we have a long-standing collaboration with Unicef, who we know are very good at doing this kind of thing.

Both rice and rose

Roger Akelius says that the donation has received a mixed response.

– It's rare that I've received so many positive emails with praise, he says and continues:

– Then there are also people who write that I am an anti-Semite. But I am only anti-Israeli leadership, who are accused of genocide. It is deeply disgusting how a government can order that children be blown up and shot in that way.

He is clear about what he believes needs to change.

– The only solution is for Palestine to become a completely separate state, for them to open their ports and airports and not be slaves to Israel's racial oppression.



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Published March 23

Updated yesterday 11:11



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